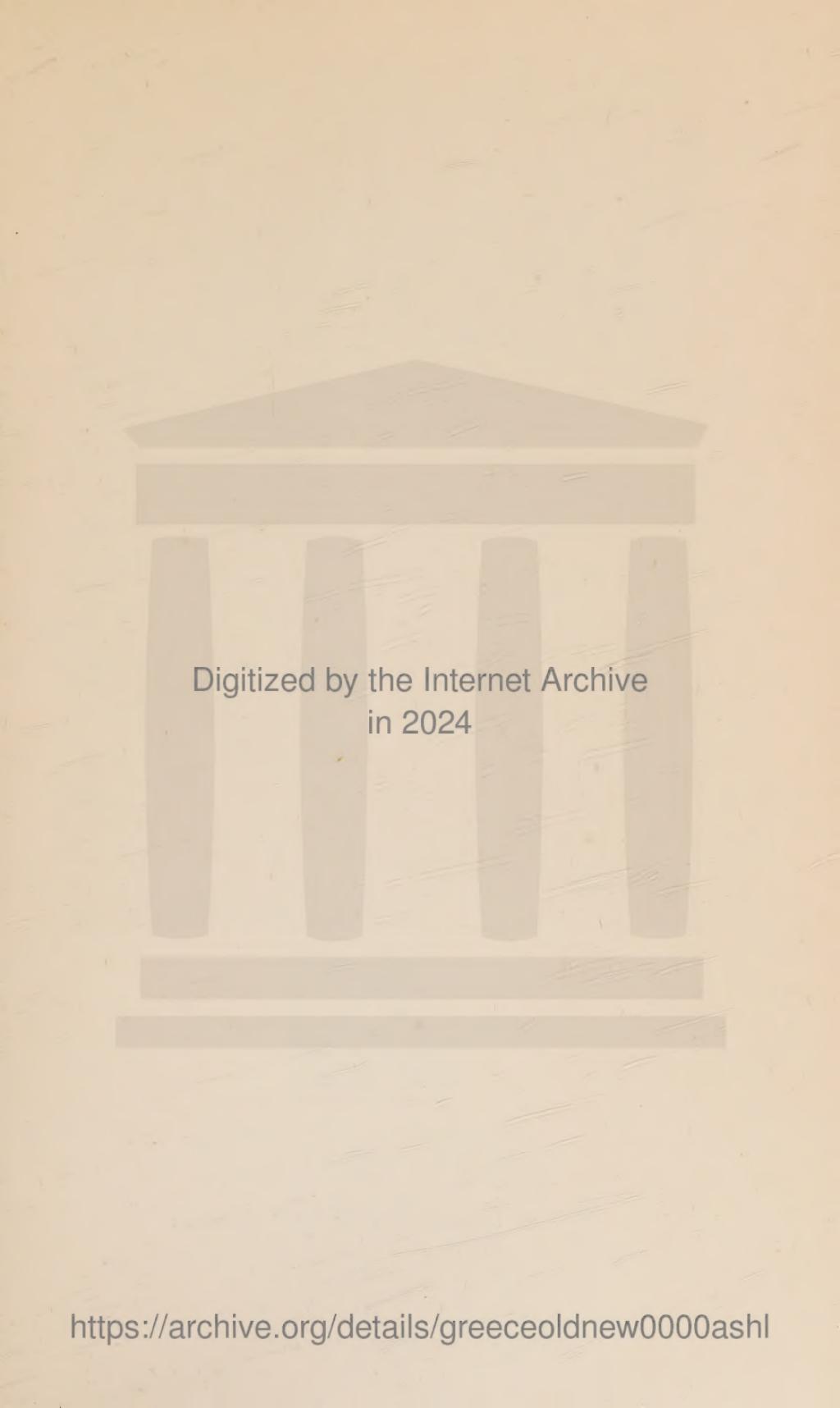






GREECE OLD AND NEW

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VIEW OF LYKABETTOS FROM THE PARTHENON

GREECE OLD AND NEW

BY
ASHLEY BROWN

WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS AND
A MAP



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PREFACE

IN this book I have endeavoured to embody the kind of general information which I myself needed when I first visited Greece. I have not attempted to replace the ordinary guide-book, which in Greece as elsewhere is really an essential. But there is a point of view which no mere guide-book can suggest, and in this respect, I believe, this volume will prove valuable.

The secret of Delphi, for instance, does not lie in the probable dimensions of the Temple of Apollo, important as these may be, but in that atmosphere of mystery which once enveloped this spot and which even to-day seems to linger about the grave of the Oracle. Similarly, the importance of Sparta proceeded not from the splendour of its monuments but from the character of its men.

On the archæological side, I have not ventured on any opinions of my own except as regards the deductions to be drawn from the position of the Parthenon in its relationship to the site of the earlier temple of Athena.

The arrangement of the book is frankly unorthodox, but like the subjects touched on, it was suggested by my own requirements and will, I believe, be found convenient and even logical.

The islands of the *Æ*gean are not dealt with in this volume. They have an appeal of their own—but it is not that of the mainland and they are likely to be visited in a different fashion and for different reasons.

I consider myself extremely fortunate in being able to reproduce certain photographs, attaining to the dignity of pictures, which Mr. Miltiade Ziffo has kindly placed at my disposal.

ASHLEY BROWN

June, 1927

GREECE OLD AND NEW

CHAPTER I ROUTES TO GREECE

“The boatman still keeps beckoning
And others reach their journey’s end.”—CHINESE LYRIC.

THE traveller to Greece has the choice of more than one picturesque route to his destination. Whether he travels throughout overland or, as I prefer to do, leaves the train for the steamer at Trieste, Venice or Brindisi, he is assured in advance of a more than usually pleasant and interesting journey.

Of what may be termed the “long sea” route by the steamers from Marseilles, it is only necessary for me to mention that the recently constructed boats of the French Companies are comfortable and well managed. It is, however, a defect of this route that land is rarely in sight. Again, the journey by rail across France is not to be compared for interest with the Simplon route through Switzerland, or the Mt. Cenis route followed by the Rome and Brindisi Express.

In short, it may safely be assumed that most tourists *en route* to Greece will travel overland to Trieste, Venice or Brindisi, and thence by steamer, or alternatively will take the Simplon-Orient Express which runs three times weekly from Paris to Athens.

While dealing with the Simplon-Orient Express, I may remark that both the outward and homeward journeys are somewhat tantalizing, although this is not the fault

of the companies concerned. Time in these days is of more importance than scenic beauty, and this famous train, to complete its long run of about 2,000 miles within the booked time of a little more than three days, has to take its scenery as it reaches it. As the inevitable result, the passenger on his outward trip is treated to a delightful, if fleeting, vision of the glories of Switzerland, but passes through the scarcely less interesting country of Southern Yugo-Slavia in the night.

On the return trip the position is reversed. Leaving Athens in the morning, the train spends the day climbing over and around the mountains of Greece, and for some time on the following day, the less rugged, but more picturesque, scenery of Yugo-Slavia will keep the traveller's face glued to the window. After Belgrade, however, the country is more or less flat to Milan, and Switzerland is passed for the most part in darkness, or at best, is seen by uncertain moonlight at the cost of one's sleep.

The Mt. Cenis route to Rome and Brindisi, although perhaps scarcely as attractive as the Simplon route, possesses a beauty of its own. Here, of course, the tunnel is immediately upon the frontier, and I personally can never pass through this great work without wondering what would be the present state of affairs if the Italians had been a prey to the same silly fears that have prevented the construction of the Channel Tunnel.

Certainly there is not a solitary argument against the much-needed Channel Tunnel which does not apply with one hundred times more force to the tunnel which connects France and Italy. Yet I have never met the Italian who was afraid that the French would march through in the middle of the night, or who suggested that the tunnel would constitute a national danger in time of war.

No doubt, however, if the Imperial Defence Committee had been able to impress its collective intelligence upon

successive Italian governments, this tunnel would long ago have been filled up and the traveller would reach Italy only at the expense of a journey by *diligence* across the Alps.

As I have already stated, of the various routes to Greece, my personal preference is for the Adriatic route, which, whether one travels by Venice or Trieste and the slower boat, or by Brindisi and the Express Service of the Trieste-Lloyd Line, seems to give the traveller the best of every world.

For some reason that is far from clear to me, the average man is generally in a hurry to reach his destination, and for this reason I imagine that the majority of visitors to Greece will elect to travel via Brindisi and the Constantinople Express Service. By this route, Athens is brought within forty-eight hours of Milan, sixty-six of Paris, and seventy-six of London.

The steamers employed at present, the "Teodora," the "Semiramis," and the "Cleopatra," are fast and comfortable boats upon which the service leaves nothing to be desired. This route, whether used via Trieste or Brindisi, is no doubt destined to become the fashionable route to Greece, if indeed it cannot already lay claim to that title.

There is, however, a second route via the Adriatic, which will be given preference by people who prefer, as I do, a slow and comfortable journey.

This line, sailing from Trieste, is also run by the Trieste-Lloyd Line, and the vessels, of about 6,000 tons displacement, although smaller and slower than the steamers of the Constantinople Express Service, admirably maintain the high reputation of this Company for comfort and a generous table. The itinerary varies slightly according to the ship, but the traveller is reasonably sure to see Fiume, Venice, Spalato (in Dalmatia), Bari, Brindisi, Santa Quaranta on the Albanian coast, and

Corfu. The stay at Fiume and Venice for cargo purposes is usually about 24 hours at each port.¹

Fiume, now an Italian port, gives the impression of being a clean, well-kept town, and, amidst the great mountains of Northern Yugo-Slavia, it boasts a situation which is picturesque in the extreme.

The loss of Fiume must have been a serious blow to Yugo-Slavia, which would appear to have been left without a really satisfactory port of its own. It is doubtful, also, whether the possession of this territorially isolated outpost is really of much benefit to Italy. Sentiment plays a steadily increasing part in the foreign policy of democratic peoples, and to sentiment must be ascribed the desperate effort put forth by Italy to obtain the port. But the Englishman who bears in mind his own national history, will scarcely be inclined to cast the first stone.

Two Serbian resorts near to Fiume will repay a short visit: Abbazia, across the bay, by small steamer, a rising and picturesque seaside town, and Zamat, sometimes referred to as the "Serbian Monte Carlo." I drove out to the latter place one evening and found it little more than a small village. It is, however, delightfully situated, and at the small casino, consisting at present of no more than two fair-sized rooms, there was dancing, with two or three couples on the floor, and roulette. After 11 p.m. baccarat was played, and I was astonished at the sum of money which changed hands in this remote and unpretentious building. Probably Zamat is destined to become better known in the near future.

Bari is, of course, to-day a fairly important commercial town of between seventy and eighty thousand inhabitants. In mediæval history it was the scene of

¹ As these details vary from time to time, the reader should consult the London tourist office of the Italian State Railways and steamship lines before making definite arrangements.

more than one desperate conflict between the Europeans and their Saracen invaders. In 1002 it was wrested from the Saracens by the Venetians; in 1156 it was destroyed by King William the First, and about ten years later it was restored by the second William, known, not unreasonably, as "William the Good."

The visitor to Bari will probably visit the Cathedral of San Sabino, which was commenced in 1027. This structure, originally a fine Byzantine building, was unhappily modernized in 1745. Those familiar with Spain will trace a distinct resemblance between the Campanile of San Sabino and the Moorish tower of Seville.

The church of St. Nicholas, commenced in 1087, is believed to contain beneath the silver altar, the bones of St. Nicholas of Myra, and upon that saint's day, the 8th May, great numbers of pilgrims visit the church.

St. Nicholas was, in his time, a churchman of considerable authority. His posthumous fame, however, probably rests less upon points of doctrine than upon his reputation for miracle-working. Not content with those "miracles" which he managed to crowd into a busy life, his body preserved its powers after death, to the great profit, of course, of the church that held his bones.

Apart from "miracles," however, as to which, in any event, superstitious people will never accept the explanations or denials of science, St. Nicholas has a pleasant reputation. He was, it is said, a "bourgeois" saint—"protecting the weak against the strong, the poor against the rich, the slave against his master." After all, the man whose character can be so portrayed may well be forgiven a few "miracles."

The appearance of the Lion of St. Mark on the Piazza Mercantile is explained by the fact that it commemorates the defeat of the Saracens by the Venetian Fleet in 1002.

Of the modern town of Bari, it need only be said

that it is fairly typical of Southern Italian towns. Not perhaps a place to stay in of deliberate choice, but well worth a visit while the steamer unloads its cargo against the long breakwater.

At Brindisi the Express route and the slower Adriatic routes converge. Here the traveller overland via Rome will take the luxurious express steamer for Athens and Constantinople.

Brindisi is the logical point of departure for the Near East, but is best known, perhaps, for the still larger steamers which sail thence for Egypt, Bombay, Karachi, Colombo, the Straits and the Far East generally. I understand that something like 75 per cent. of the passengers by these ships are British, an eloquent testimony to the Trieste-Lloyd Line, and the spirit of efficiency which, in recent years, has permeated everything Italian.

The short sea trip of twenty-four hours from Brindisi to Piræus by the Express Line is picturesque in the extreme. The cruise through the blue waters of the Gulf of Corinth, enclosed on either side by the mountains of Northern Greece and the Peloponnesus, is not readily forgotten. The Corinth Canal, again, is unique.

The slower boats cross the Adriatic to the Albanian shore and drop anchor off Santa Quaranta, the humble port of Yannina, about 60 miles distant.

There is not much to be seen of Santa Quaranta, which, by the way, takes its name from the Byzantine church of the Forty Saints, situated to the left of the Pass, above the town. The mountain-encircled houses, and the jetty, make a charming picture, while the solitary road running upwards in one straight cut along the side of the hill is intensely intriguing. Behind Santa Quaranta lie the mountains of Albania and the equally wild tracks of Macedonia, and I do not envy the man who does not find attractive a road that marches so directly from the comfort of a modern liner to lands of unknown adventure.

On leaving Santa Quaranta, the steamer for some hours makes its way between the mainland and Corfu, probably the loveliest island of its type in Europe.

The strait is at times so narrow and enclosed as almost to resemble a lake. At the town of Corfu a stay is made for cargo purposes, and the passenger will probably arrange with one or other of the native boatmen to ferry him ashore, drive him round the town, and bring him safely back before the steamer sails. By far the wiser course, however, is to leave the steamer at this point, and to spend the interval until the arrival of the next boat enjoying the delights of the island. I have no doubt whatever that Corfu is one of the great pleasure resorts of the future. There is, therefore, much to be said for seeing it at the present moment.

The journey from Corfu round Cape Matapan is normally made at night, Piræus being reached in the early morning. If the steamer is late, however, the traveller will be afforded a very pleasant glimpse of the mountains of the Peloponnesus. I doubt whether there is 100 yards of flat shore anywhere upon the Peloponnesian coast. The view, as the ship approaches Piræus, is delightful, and, in certain lights, will bear comparison with the Gulf of Naples. It is at this point that the expectant traveller obtains his first view of Athens and its ancient sentinels—Lykabettos and the Acropolis.

CHAPTER II

MODERN ATHENS

“Athens is the place which best shows what the Greeks have done since the Turks left, though it is not the best place at which to estimate the general state of the country.”—Sir R. C. JEBB, F.R.S.

THE interest of modern Athens is chiefly archæological. In this respect it differs from the rest of Greece, the scenery of which would attract the tourist even if the country were as destitute of past glories as the United States. None the less the surroundings of Athens are picturesque in the extreme. Except to the south and south-west where the waters of the Saronic Gulf meet the Plain of Attica, the eye meets with mountains in every direction. These mountains, while not of extreme height, are imposing and constitute a distant and irregular barrier against adverse climatic conditions. Athens is, as it were, situated in a vast cup of which three sides have been badly chipped and one is missing, the missing side being that of the coast-line to the south and south-west. Upon the floor of the cup two hills rise with arresting suddenness, the Acropolis to the south-west and Mount Lykabettos to the north-east.

It would be difficult indeed for anyone who has visited Athens to visualize the city without these famous hills, so large a part do they fill in the landscape. The Acropolis stands 512 feet above sea-level, or 230 feet above the surrounding plain; Lykabettos, higher but more pointed and consequently less useful in days gone by for the purposes of defence, reaches 910 feet above

sea-level. Athens, once little more than a cluster of buildings about the Acropolis, spread with the years towards Lykabettos, and now flows round the base of that hill. In short, Lykabettos, which once stood like a sentinel beyond the confines of the city, will soon be situated well within it.

The visitor having noted these prominent hills will turn his more immediate attention to the streets and shops of the city, and here, I think, he will be disappointed. Few indeed are the Athenian streets which are everywhere in good order. If you speak to a Greek about the state of the streets he will tell you that the country has been at war almost incessantly since 1912, and that such small matters as well-paved roads and level pavements have been of necessity neglected. A more intimate acquaintance with Athens, however, will cause the visitor to wonder whether the state of the streets is not to some extent the visible sign of that spiritual slackness with which the Greek contends in vain. Indeed, the holes in the roadway and gaps in the pavement appear to be the inevitable result of a system of roadmaking that places slabs of stone upon mother earth and fondly hopes that the dry ground will not crack nor the moist soil expand.

The finest of the streets from the point of view of appearance is undoubtedly the Boulevard de l'Université. Many of the buildings upon this street are of marble from Mount Pentelicus. The street will chiefly be remembered by a sequence of modern buildings comprising the Academy of Science, the University, and the Library. The first of these buildings consists entirely of Pentelic marble and is constructed in the classical Greek style, with Ionic colonnades. The Library consists of nearly 300,000 volumes and manuscripts, many of them of considerable value.

It is difficult to account for the curious lack of first-class shops. I have no desire to do Athens an injustice,

and I readily admit that there are many excellent shops in Hermes and Stadium Streets and elsewhere. But nowhere in Athens, so far as I could see, is there any store which would be ranked as first class in Western European cities of equal importance. It has been suggested to me that the explanation lies in the inability of the Greek to co-operate with his fellows, that he is, in short, too much of an "individualist" to sink his personality in that of some great selling organization. This may be the case, but at the moment I am concerned more with the result than the cause, and it is certainly the fact that there is an opening in Athens for a great store on the line of Harrods or Barkers, a want which the Greek will not or cannot satisfy. A branch establishment of one of our great London retail stores would do well in Athens.

The central square in the city is the Place de la Constitution, and here, if anywhere, we should expect to see Athenian commerce and social life represented by inspiring buildings. The fact, however, falls far short of the hope. At the top of the Square, and separated from it by the Boulevard de l'Université, stands the old Royal Palace, an uninspiring structure. The only other building of any interest is the Hotel Grande Bretagne, which occupies the upper portion of the northern side of the Square. The Square itself is occupied, as to two-thirds or so, by palm trees and semi-tropical plants, but the lower portion is little better than an open-air annexe of a neighbouring café. Incidentally it speaks volumes for the Greek climate that I have seen every table in the Square fully occupied as early in the year as the beginning of March. From Constitution Square, the two important thoroughfares of Stadium Street and Hermes Street lead, the first to the Place de la Concorde, a less imposing edition of the Place de la Constitution, and the latter to the Dipylon, "the principal entrance of classic Athens."

In Stadium Street the buildings are for the most part commonplace, even the Parliament Buildings being without distinction. Hermes Street, which is largely given over to shops, is a narrow and not unsatisfactory thoroughfare of no outstanding interest.

At this stage, and before dealing in detail with more interesting matters, I would permit myself one further complaint. The old Palace is separated from the road running across the top of Place de la Constitution by an extremely large open courtyard of gravel and mud. Is there any other country that would have neglected to plant a few flowers, or even a little grass, before the most important building of the central square in the capital of the State?

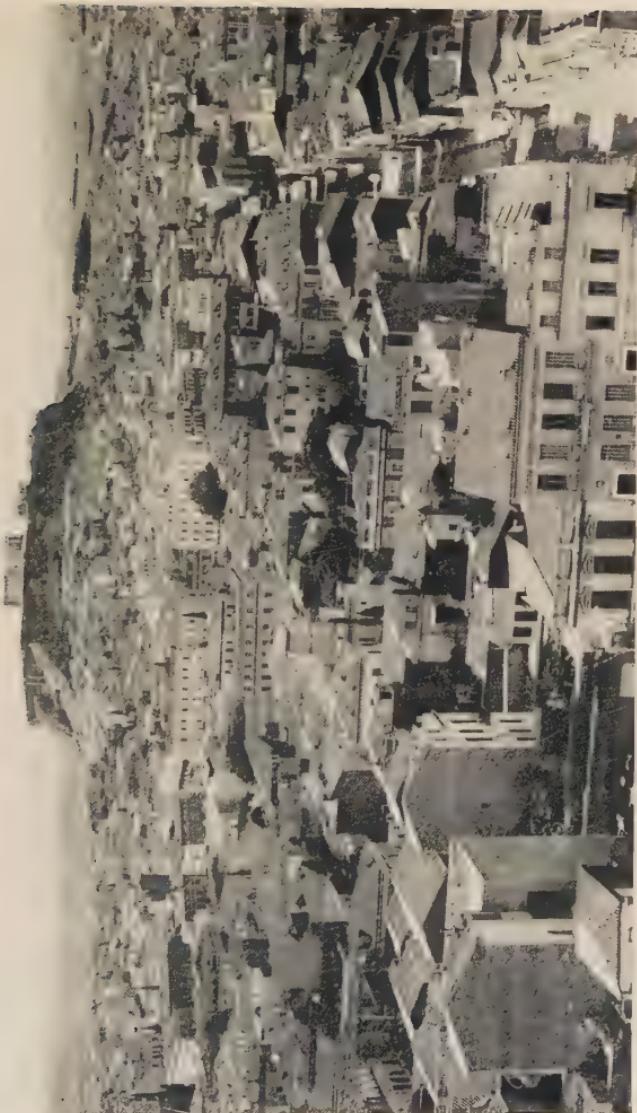
Such criticism may legitimately be made, the more so since the appeal of Athens remains vivid and direct even when everything has been said to its detriment.

The dust which lies so thickly everywhere and which the slightest puff of wind will raise in a cloud is invariably a subject of comment by the new arrival. Doubtless the application of tar and other modern methods to the Athenian roads will lessen the evil, but Athens will always be a dusty city whatever man may do. In the entrance hall to every hotel a boy stands with a feather broom which he quickly passes over the shoes of anyone entering, and in every square or open place in the city lines of shoeblocks contend ceaselessly with dust. I doubt whether there is any other city on the earth in which the ratio of shoeblocks to the total population is anything like that of Athens—and it is all due to the dust. But it is surprising how quickly one becomes accustomed to local conditions of this sort. After a few days the visitor does not give the matter a thought. He has acquired what an American would term “the shoeblock habit.” He is careful to see that a feather broom is at

hand when he enters his hotel, but he has ceased to notice the dust.

As regards public vehicles Athens is in a state of transition, the horse cab may still be seen in large numbers, but I am glad to say that the taxi is rapidly replacing it. The roads indeed are at present very unfavourable to motor traffic. However, in course of time the motor will produce its own good roads. I may mention here that quite recently a tax of 2 drachmas has been levied upon every vehicle leaving the city confines. It is intended that this money shall be expended upon the upkeep of the roads, but it is perhaps too early to say that this good intention will be realized. The taxi, generally speaking, is a fair-sized car of any make fitted with a taximeter. The rate is cheap enough, and the drivers, so far as my experience goes, are most civil and obliging. Being unable to speak Greek I was in the habit of writing out my destination in Greek characters on a slip of paper which I handed to my driver. Usually this would answer quite well. I discovered, however, that the Athenian driver is loath to admit that he does not recognize an address when he sees it, and more than once my driver has taken me some considerable distance before he has found courage to dismount from his seat and consult some passer-by as to where I wished to go. On the other hand, these drivers will put themselves to endless trouble to find the address you require, and sooner than fail to take you to the door of the house they will if necessary drive their car over country no English taxi driver would look at. Although I frequently set out with an insufficient address, I cannot remember a solitary instance in which my taxi driver failed to get me where I wanted to go.

The horse cabs are driven by men of the older school. The drivers are invariably well disposed to tourists, and faced with the competition of taxis they are willing to



ATHENS, LOOKING TOWARDS THE ACROPOLIS

make bargains at cut-throat rates. However, the Greek, generally speaking, does not know how to look after his horse, and the ride is usually slow and unpleasant. Fortunately, the horse cab in Athens will soon be a thing of the past.

For general purposes the city is well served by electric trams and motor omnibuses. The latter are of all shapes and kinds, from a crazy body erected upon a Ford chassis to the "B" type of the London General Omnibus Company, a machine which can still be seen in small numbers on our own streets. It was curious to see these vehicles still painted the familiar red, and bearing the legend "General" with their admonitions in English to "wait until the bus stops." I had often wondered where the old buses went to when the new "K" and "S" types replaced them. Athens supplies the answer as regards a few of them at any rate.

One of the less satisfactory of the public services in Athens at the present moment is the water supply. The town has grown at an unprecedented pace during the past few years and no real attempt has been made in this matter to keep pace with it. However an American syndicate has taken up the contract and within a year or two Athens will have all the water that it needs. At the present moment in some of the small hotels the visitor finds it difficult to obtain a bath, and even at the Grande Bretagne the visitor is requested at every turn to economize the precious fluid. What was quite new to me was the custom of the Grande Bretagne to sell their drinking water at so much a bottle. It is true that the price is a very low one, and it is satisfactory to know that one can drink water at lunch without fearing the consequences, but one feels that water at least should be given freely even in Athens.

The housing problem in the Greek capital is even more acute than it is at present in England. For many years

Greece has always been just in or just out of a war and the resulting insecurity has had its inevitable effect. The influx of great numbers of refugees from Asia Minor has, of course, added to the urgency of the problem. Although the poorer refugees are temporarily housed in Government buildings such as the old Palace, in theatres, and in commandeered warehouses, great numbers have overflowed into existing lodging-houses and tenements. Even the hotels have been affected by the overcrowding, and it is difficult to secure a room in any of the reasonably comfortable hotels without booking well in advance. The manager of the Hotel Grande Bretagne informed me that if the hotel were three times its present size he could still fill it very easily. I can believe this to be the case in view of the numbers of people who complain that they have been unable to find a room there. It is the more extraordinary for this reason that the large and new hotel constructed within a few yards of the Grande Bretagne has never been completed. I have heard many stories which affect to explain why this fine building has been, as it were, abandoned, almost on the eve of its opening, but whatever the truth may be the fact remains that there is not enough hotel accommodation in Athens and that the city contains a large and almost completed hotel which for some time past has remained derelict.

The visitor who secures a room at the Hotel Grande Bretagne, however, will not be inclined to complain of any lack of comfort. His bill will not be on the cheapest scale, but on the other hand he will enjoy the comforts of a first-class hotel, and will be able to study at his leisure many more diverse and interesting types of human nature than he is likely to see under the same roof elsewhere.

As regards theatres and places of amusement, Athens does not stand high. It is necessary to remember, however, that the floating foreign population of the city

is not great and that such theatres and cinemas as there are, cater for Greeks. Chancing one evening to drop in at one of the best of the cinema houses, I was astonished to find that the *pièce de résistance* was a Charlie Chaplin film dating, I believe, from 1915 or 1916. But what astonished me still more was the fact that the titles and descriptive matter were shown on the screen in German. Occasionally a greatly abridged version was given in Greek, but frequently no translation was attempted. The audience, however, appeared entirely contented.

Returning to the theatre, I doubt whether an Englishman unfamiliar with the Greek language is much worse off in the matter of plays than would be a Greek in London unfamiliar with English. The only advantage the latter would hold over the former would lie in the fact that certain of the English pieces can be witnessed as spectacles. As against this, the Greek theatres frequently render Greek translations of English and other foreign plays. While I was in Athens one of Oscar Wilde's plays was played.

The lack of really good concerts is, however, very noticeable. I was in fact forced to the conclusion that the Greeks are far from being a musical people. Some confirmation of this view may be derived from the lack of good music that is noticeable in the services of the Greek Church.

One feature of the Athens streets which may possibly be worth mentioning is the curious absence of public clocks. I do not know of a solitary chiming clock in the city. Even in the Grande Bretagne, where, if anywhere, foreign influence is paramount, I found the clocks habitually differing from each other. Ultimately I consulted the manager of the hotel who confided to me that for his part he set his watch by a small clock in a shop window in Stadium Street. Thereafter I did the same, feeling that what actually was the time, was of

less importance than that we should all agree as to what we thought it was.

One of the few pleasant spots within the city is the garden behind the old Palace. This is not laid out in beds but is planted with orange trees, lemon trees, palms and so on. In the warm evenings this garden provides a pleasant resting-place.

The Zappeion, which stands upon the further side of the Palace Gardens is a modern building, opened in 1888 for the exhibition of Greek manufactures. The building is not particularly interesting, apart from any exhibition which may be held in it.

The climb up Lykabettos is an arduous affair, but the visitor to the city who does not undertake it will miss a view that would amply repay far greater exertions. The early morning or late afternoon is the best time for this walk. The small church of St. George at the top does not possess any particular interest. Greece is the land of projects and Lykabettos is no more exempt from great intentions than any other part of Athens. There is a project on foot to erect an hotel at its summit and to link it with the city by a short rack railway. Fortunately, however, the existing path is a good one and it will not be necessary to wait until this idea has been carried out. The walk up Lykabettos was a favourite "after tea" employment of mine and it never failed to bring home to me what a noisy city Athens really is, the hooting and roaring of the traffic below being clearly audible upon the summit.

I should possibly have pointed out when referring to the shops that in the middle of the day every one is closed. This applies also to offices of all kinds. Stenographers, for instance, work from 8.30 a.m. to midday when they go home until 3 p.m., at which hour business re-awakens to remain in full swing until 6.30 or 7 p.m. This habit of the long midday *siesta* is general in Athens

and the visitor is almost certain for a time to find it very disconcerting. Business men, Government officials and others make up for the loss of time by working far later than is customary in England, and for this reason the dinner hour is unduly belated. Habitually in Athens one dines at nine o'clock, an hour which the hungry visitor will consider an abomination. But everything is, as it were, thrust back by the long midday rest. If people dine late, they also entertain late. A professor of the University in Athens asked if he might call on me at my hotel at 10 p.m. and about midnight requested me to continue our conversation at his house, from which I ultimately returned at 2 a.m.

No account of modern Athens would be complete that failed to refer to the city police force which under Sir Frederick Halliday, an Englishman lent to the Greek Government for the purpose, was rapidly replacing the Gendarmerie when I last visited Athens. During the dictatorship of General Pangalos this force was the object of attack, but with the restoration of Constitutional Government, wiser councils have prevailed and the new force is once again replacing the old Gendarmerie, who, whatever other merits they may have possessed, were not good police.

The man who first grasped the necessity for distinguishing between police required for rural districts and those required for town work, was Venizelos, who fetched Halliday from India in 1918. Some time was occupied with inevitable difficulties, but by October 1921 the first fully trained men had assumed duty. The importance of this development was greater than might at first be imagined. Security to life and property are essential to successful commercial endeavour. But of equal or even of greater importance, is the confidence which the man in the street feels in a force which he knows to be impartial.

The scheme originally outlined comprised Athens, Piræus, Patras and Salonica, the men being trained in Corfu. Other towns, however, such as Volo, applied for the new force, and but for the action of the late Government a few years would have sufficed to spread the network of an efficient police force throughout Greece.

I was very impressed by the efficiency with which the new police handle the traffic, and was not surprised to learn that this work was found to involve considerable nervous strain.

The hours of duty have now been reduced to $2\frac{1}{2}$ in a shift and there are two shifts in a day. These hours do not seem particularly onerous, but traffic direction in Athens is very exacting work, the conditions not being comparable to those obtaining in London, where the traffic is far more dense and can be permitted to move in steady streams at certain intervals. I am convinced that the nervous strain upon the man is far less in such circumstances than is the case when he is called upon, as in Athens, to deal with isolated cars, travelling at considerable speed from different directions. At any rate Sir Frederick Halliday remarked to me that he found his men could not stand the long hours previously in force and that $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours on end had been found to be the maximum time advisable.

The age of the men is from 21 to 30 years and they receive six months' training before they take up duty. The educational tests are fairly severe, but there is no lack of recruits and with a little training the raw material shapes well, although the men, of course, have not the stamina of the English police. I should add that the Greek Police is the only unarmed force in the Balkans. This remark refers only to the day time, and the local Director of Police can, of course, authorize men to carry revolvers when occasion requires, but the fact that the

men are normally unarmed during the day certainly suggests a common-sense and unmelodramatic English way of doing things.

A modern police force should concern itself solely with the prevention of crime and the safeguarding of public order, and in so far as it fulfils these duties it tends to become International, hence the finger print department set up by the new police and the close contact which it maintains with the police of other countries. This is indeed the more modern aspect of a force which, in days past, was almost entirely local in its organization and which was regarded by men in positions of authority as a convenient weapon with which to meet criticism.

As was only to be anticipated, the new force was at first very unpopular with the Gendarmerie, which gradually lost to it its most important duties. But that feeling had practically disappeared during the past few years, and one can only regret that it should now have been stirred up again.

A pressing need of the city, from the traveller's point of view, is the employment of Latin letters upon street boards. I was surprised to find how many visitors to Athens are unfamiliar with the Greek characters. To all such the names of the streets are a closed book. I do not, of course, suggest that Greek characters should be superseded, but merely that the street names should be repeated in characters with which English, French, American and Italian visitors are alike familiar.

The Greek is intensely interested in politics which he delights to discuss over a cup of coffee in one or other of the cafés which abound in Athens. Newspapers are consequently in great demand, and it must be admitted that the supply is entirely adequate. Every political party, every theory of government has its own organ and all are read with avidity. Placing my foot one day on the box of a very diminutive and threadbare urchin of

about ten years of age, I found it necessary to rap with my stick on the wood to draw his attention to the fact that I wished my shoes shined. Hearing the noise he looked up from his paper and coolly requested me to patronize the boy next to him, adding, "I am reading the speech of Mr. Michalopoulos." I thought the little fellow must be pulling my leg, but a Greek who had obligingly translated his remark assured me that he was perfectly serious.

For the benefit of visitors and others one or two daily papers are published in French. The following from *Le Progrès*, on the abuse of alcohol, amused me by reason of its candour . . . "nous nous bornons à enregistrer ce fait lamentable et à faire retentir, en tant que journalistes, l'éternelle sonnette d'alarme qui, dans ce bienheureux pays, n'a jamais d'écho."

The Athens Carnival which occurs in March is nowadays comparatively a tame affair. There was a time when it was far otherwise. The present policy of the police, however, is to "push the carnival off the streets." Greece is a country in which political feeling runs high and the mask and domino afforded too good a disguise to be neglected by the man who had a score to settle. Rarely, indeed, did the carnival pass without an assassination or two.

Even to-day, however, it is not difficult for the merest stranger to perceive that the city is in a festive mood. Great crowds of people throng the pavement; every car, omnibus, conveyance is crowded to excess. Paper streamers drift about like the strands of a broken web; and the incessant tooting of motor horns, always so annoying in Athens, is redoubled. Of peasant costumes there are unfortunately not many to be seen. But here and there we notice a woman in all her village finery or more frequently a man in the short white shirt and long white trunks, associated so generally in the mind

of Englishmen with the Greek brigand of newspaper reports.

It is the children who bring most colour to the scene. Punchinellos of three or four are as plentiful as blackberries in September. On the whole a cheerful and quite noisy scene.

In the halls, dances are the order of the day. But there is nothing essentially national in the better or middle class dance. It is left for the villagers on the final day of the Carnival to preserve a national custom and to feast and dance in true Greek fashion. Curiously enough this habit is very popular amongst the Athenians who seldom fail on this occasion to drive out in cars and carriages to view the proceedings, which, it must be admitted, are quite picturesque.

Athens has by no means a bad criminal record, although the influence of refugees from Asia Minor has increased the number of petty crimes. Many of these men it must be remembered reached Greece direct from Turkish prisons, and the wonder is not that they should include a few black sheep but that the black sheep are comparatively so rare. Crime in Athens is mostly of the small order, thefts and pocket-picking and such like.

The Greek is not naturally quarrelsome, and where there is an assassination it is generally due to some love affair—a brother will kill his sister's lover or a jealous man will kill a mistress he believes has been unfaithful—but such cases are rare. Curiously enough, however, there are a fair number of crimes of this sort between friends. Here it is that the temperament of the Greek plays him false. A friendly conversation across the café table will possibly develop after a few drinks into a quarrelsome argument, and this again will lead to a dispute, with the result that one of the men will lance his knife across the table. Of course, he weeps over his friend's body and is quite honestly in despair, but the

man is dead and there is nothing more to be done in the direction of putting things right. As I have said, however, crime of all sorts is comparatively rare in Athens, but pick-pockets are everywhere. As an Englishman remarked to me, "The Greeks have very nimble fingers which are constantly slipping into other people's pockets."

Strictly speaking, both the Stadium and the Museum should be dealt with under "Modern Athens," but it will probably be more convenient to defer reference to them until we deal with those historical buildings which in some instances were contemporary with the original Stadium.

The curiosity of the visitor is certain to be awakened by the halves of currency notes which circulate in such numbers throughout Greece. The origin of these half notes is indeed extremely curious and constitutes one of the most interesting experiments in finance which I should imagine any country has so far attempted.

It happened in 1922, when the credit of the country was at an extremely low ebb, that the Government of the day stood in great need of money. Enquiries in London and Paris elicited the fact that no loan would be forthcoming from either direction, and it was in these circumstances that Mr. Protopapadakis, who was Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, hit upon the ingenious idea of borrowing for the Government one half the available loose cash in Greece.

Accordingly, without giving warning of his intentions, he brought in a law on March 25th of that year, empowering the Government to take one half of all the currency loose or in the Banks. This was effected by cutting the notes in half. The half carrying the royal insignia was appropriated by the Government, and the other half circulated as currency for half the value of the original note. Against the half taken by the Government a

Bond was issued carrying interest at 6 per cent. per annum. Thus the holder of a 100 drachmas note was able to use one half of it as currency to the value of 50 drachmas ; the other half he lodged with the Government, receiving in return scrip carrying 6 per cent. interest. From the date upon which the law came into force the circulation of Bond halves, as they were called, became a criminal offence, but the man who owed money was enabled to discharge his debt as to one half in cash and one half in the new scrip.

It is difficult to see, after the first shock had been sustained, that anybody was much the worse for this procedure. The man who possessed ten thousand drachmas and owed a debt of eight thousand found that he was possessed only of five thousand drachmas and Government scrip to the value of another five thousand drachmas, but so far as his debt of eight thousand drachmas was concerned he was able to discharge it by handing over four thousand in cash and four thousand in scrip. The Government on the other hand was able to issue new notes to the total value of the halves called in without increasing the total value of the notes in circulation and by so doing depreciating their value.

It should perhaps be added that the scrip exchanged for the unusable half of currency notes soon stood above par.

Mr. Protopapadakis, who carried through this unique exploit, was one of the Ministers subsequently shot as the result of the Smyrna débâcle.

In 1926 the Government of the day again resorted to a forced loan similar to that of 1922 : all the currency notes in circulation of denominations above twenty-five drachmas being reduced in value, upon this occasion by 25 per cent.

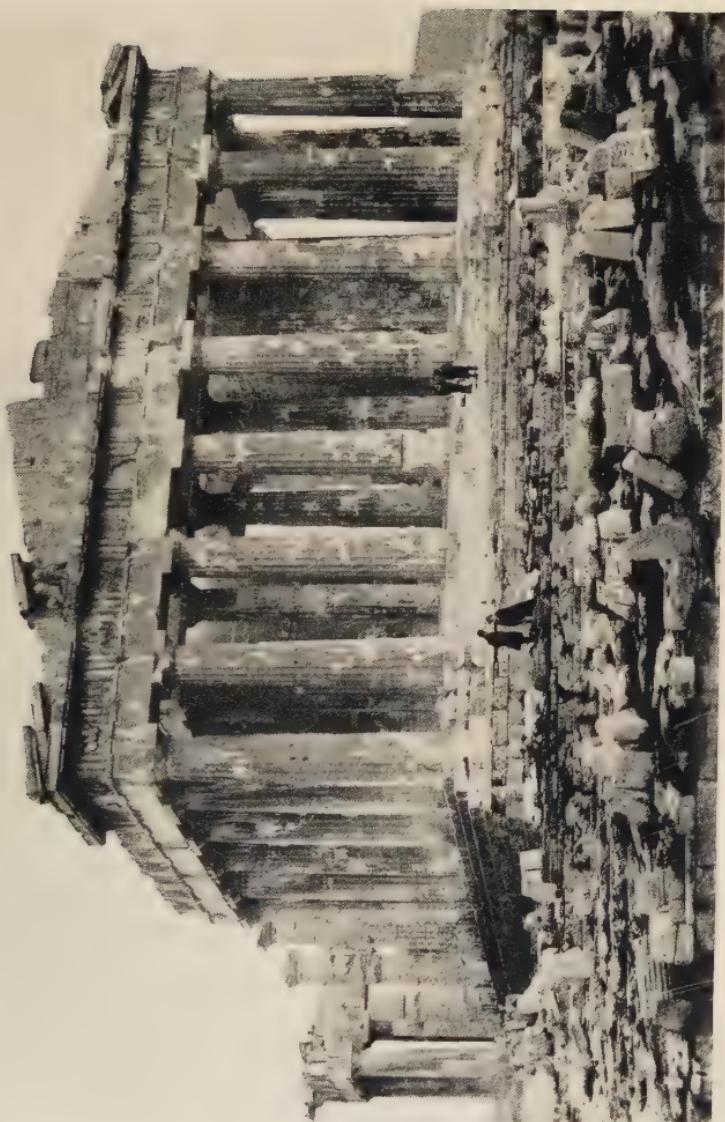
The question is sometimes asked whether Athens possesses any attractions for the visitor apart from the

Acropolis. Admittedly the city itself will not bear comparison even with some of the provincial towns of France or Italy, but when we speak of Athens we mean something more than mere buildings and streets. To a man who knows the city, Athens conjures up a vision of Mount Parnes and Mount Pentelicus and of tints indescribable, flung by the setting sun upon the flank of Mount Hymettos. Above all, the name will recall to him an atmosphere of such limpidity and clearness that no other can compare with it.

Many writers have attempted to do justice to the clear and luminous air of the Greek capital, but they have failed, I think, as completely as those word painters who have attempted to describe the glory of the setting sun as it is reflected upon Hymettos, and they have failed for the best of reasons, that these things are not capable of adequate description.

Athens, indeed, has an appeal of its own. It contrives to retain its faults and to hold our affections to the end.

THE PARTHENON, ATHENS



CHAPTER III

ANCIENT ATHENS

THE ACROPOLIS—TEMPLE OF OLYMPIAN ZEUS—THEATRE OF DIONYSUS—PRISON OF SOCRATES—THE AREOPAGUS—THE THESIUM—THE STADIUM—THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

“The gods hearken to him who hearkens to them.”—HOMER.

THE ACROPOLIS

IT was my experience when visiting the Acropolis that every shred of information I possessed regarding the great monuments to be seen there, assumed immediately a completely new importance. This is perhaps the great argument in favour of travel. So far as the mere accumulation of knowledge is concerned, the reader in the British Museum is infinitely better placed than the tourist upon the steps of the Parthenon. But a little knowledge applied on the spot invests a visit to the Acropolis with a pleasure that can never be derived from books. As the reader will be aware, Athens is really the product of the Acropolis, a fact which immediately comes home to the tourist who, for a moment, regards the hill merely as a fortress. Lykabettos, across the city, is higher, about 910 feet against 510 feet above sea-level; but the area at the top of Lykabettos available for a defensive force is very slight. Hence it was inevitable that the earliest settlers, to whom a safe encampment was of the first importance, should elect to fortify the Acropolis.

This rocky plateau of crystalline limestone stands about 230 feet above the surrounding plain. Upon the north, south and east it rises precipitous and inaccessible. Upon the west side it slopes towards the valley below. It was upon the west side, therefore, that a well defended entrance was constructed. The length of the plateau at its greatest is 886 feet ; its breadth, with the artificial extension of the southern wall, is about 512 feet. As the importance of Athens increased, the town spread around its base and the Acropolis became a citadel into which in case of invasion the population could retire. By the date of the Persian invasion, however, Athens had entirely outgrown the defensive resources of the Acropolis, which had assumed in place of its early military importance, a certain religious significance. Thus, when the Persian troops of Xerxes make their appearance in Athens in 480 B.C., the Athenian women and children are in *Ægina* or Salamis. Only a small garrison holds the Acropolis as a detaining force.

At this time (480 B.C.) the defences of the Acropolis were much less in evidence than its temples. Immediately to the south of an earlier Erechtheum stood a great temple to Athena of which to-day only the foundation may be traced, and south of that, with the scaffolding about it, was the old Parthenon still far from completed. All these buildings, however, were utterly destroyed by the Persians, who slaughtered the defenders after they had gained the top of the rock by means of a secret path upon the precipitous north side. Only corpses, heaped-up debris and smoking timbers remained upon the Acropolis.

With the defeat of the Persian fleet at Salamis and the Grecian victory at Platæa (479 B.C.) the Persian menace was removed and Athens entered upon her days of greatness. It was inevitable in the circumstances that new temples should be erected to the goddess whose arm had triumphed over the barbarian.

It is not known when the earlier Parthenon had been commenced, although it is a plausible suggestion that it dated from the days of Cleisthenes. In order to provide a satisfactory foundation for this temple, the hill was built up upon its southern side, a work which was greatly extended when the new Parthenon was put in hand after the Persian invasion. Thus, the original southern wall was considerably to the north of the spring of Alcippe.

The retreat of the Persians was followed by the rapid rise of Athens to power and wealth. Democracy was not destined to prove an unmixed blessing to the Athenians, but the later days of irresponsible demagogues were yet to dawn. There can be little doubt that the intention to re-establish the Acropolis as the site of magnificent temples dedicated to the worship of Athena was shared both by Themistocles and Cimon and possibly by other leaders in Attica. But, however that may be, it was left for Pericles to carry out this great work. Pericles attained to power about 459 B.C., and favoured by the large funds which the Delian Confederacy placed at his disposal he shortly afterwards prepared to put in hand the building of the Parthenon.

THE PARTHENON. According to inscriptions, the erection of the Parthenon was actually commenced in 447 B.C. and it must have been structurally complete by 438 B.C. The earlier temples had been of limestone, for which in the new Parthenon Pentelic marble was substituted. This marble was brought, as the name suggests, from the quarries of Mount Pentelicus, distant about seven miles from Athens. It is of smaller and finer crystals than the Parian, and from the presence of iron, takes on a wonderful golden tint with age. The design of the new Parthenon was drawn up by Ictinus and the work was probably executed under the supervision of Callicrates who had been responsible for the southern

of the two Long Walls connecting Athens with Piræus. Phidias, the most famous sculptor of the age, undertook the plastic decorations.

The completed temple was the most perfect example of Doric architecture known to us. It had eight columns at either end, and seventeen at either side, the corner column being counted twice over. Internally it was divided into two chambers, that known as the Hekatompedos, or temple of 100 feet, and the western Parthenon, or temple of the virgin. The care with which this great structure was planned is shown by the rise of 3 inches in the middle of the entablature which had no other object than to correct the optical illusion, produced by the sloping lines of the pediment, that caused the horizontal cornice to appear to sink at its centre. Again, the shafts of the columns, which are 32.22 feet high, with a diameter at the base of 6.23 feet, are tapered to the extent of about one twenty-fifth of their height. The columns themselves incline, on the flanks of the building, to the extent of about $1/250$ part of their height towards the cella, the corner columns being more inclined than the rest. This feature again is probably prompted by the desire to eliminate optical illusion.

"The architects who have studied the details of the construction of the Parthenon," D'Ooge tells us, "call attention to the fact that there is not a straight line of any great length nor a single vertical surface exactly plumb in the entire building. The cella wall batters inward as do also the architrave and triglyph frieze, while the cornice and the antefix lean forward. A similar departure from a straight line is seen in the lines of the oblique cornices of the gables, which are gently deflected towards the corners so as to be concave, thus producing an effect of rest and quiet."

The columns themselves, as can readily be seen from those fallen, consisted of large drums which were shaped with amazing precision and rested one upon another. The centre of each drum was slightly hollowed so that a

possible inequality in its surface could not influence the set of the drum resting upon it.

Some idea of the front of the Parthenon, at least as regards its general aspect, may be derived from the front of the British Museum in London which is, roughly speaking, of the same size. Of each structure the upper parts are comparable in height. The columns, however, differ entirely, the Ionic columns of the Museum being taller and more slender than the Doric columns of the Parthenon.

The architrave, that is the continuous support resting upon the columns, presents the effect of a single block but is in reality three pieces of marble placed edgeways side by side. This resulted either from difficulty in quarrying a single block of the requisite thickness or from the difficulty of transporting such a mass of material as a single block would have been.

The nature of the roof has given rise to many different conjectures. More than one writer has drawn attention to the apparent absence of any attempt to light the building. The probability seems to be that the roof consisted of slabs of transparent marble supported by wooden rafters.

Although the name Parthenon is now given to the whole building it was originally applied only to the comparatively small chamber of the temple in which were stored the treasures of the goddess Athena, this was the west or rear chamber of which the roof was supported by four Ionic columns. The meaning of "Parthenon" is "Maidens' Chamber," a fact which has given rise to many conjectures regarding the actual purpose for which the chamber was used. Dörpfeld suggests that the name came from the maidens (*παρθένοι*) who wove the sacred peplos of Athena. By some other authorities the name is associated with the goddess herself.

It is not certain that the Funds of the Delian Con-

federacy were kept in the Parthenon, but it is a fair presumption that such was the case. It is doubtful whether in any event these funds should have been used to defray the cost of the building, and it is hard to imagine that the authors of that project would have ignored the obvious, if illegitimate excuse, that the Fund itself was to benefit from the outlay.

Separated from the West Cella by a solid wall was the much larger East Cella. This, the main part of the temple, contained many votive offerings and, more important than all else, the great statue of Athena which faced the visitor entering the sacred edifice by the eastern door.

"As his eyes became used to the contrast from the bright sunlight without, the first impression he would receive of the colossal statue would probably be the extraordinary richness of its decorations and of its materials, and the contrast between the smooth white surface of the ivory and the broken glimmer of light on the embossed and inlaid surfaces of the gold. Then by degrees he would pass from such details to the contemplation of the statue as a whole, of the grandeur and nobility of the image in which Phidias had embodied the Goddess of Athens."¹

We can gather but a faint idea of the effect produced by this great statue. In the National Museum at Athens may be seen a copy found at Varvakeion in 1880. But this copy is little more than 3 feet in height, and naturally fails to produce the full effect of the original which was about 30 feet high, or about 38 feet with its base. The Varvakeion statue is probably accurate in detail but no copy precisely represents the original, and, again, Phidias was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that his work would be seen *from below*. The left hand of the goddess rests lightly on her shield, the right hand outstretched supports a life-size figure of Victory. Upon her head is set an elaborate helmet of metal. The pupils of the eyes were probably of precious stones. The weight of the gold employed was, we are told, from 40 to 50 talents.

¹ Gardner, G. A.,

The spot occupied by the base of this statue may be readily distinguished to-day from the dark coloured limestone with which it is paved.

Mr. Ernest Short, in an interesting appreciation of the Parthenon, remarks :

“ The Doric Temple showed that Greek sight as well as the Greek mind had learned to abhor confusion and took delight in the lucid arrangement and articulation of parts, and in the due proportion between support and burden in architecture. . . . At his best the Greek architect never pressed beyond the point where perfect expression was possible. Vagueness was abhorrent to him. . . . In Gothic architecture development came through the necessity for repairing breakdowns, rather than by striving towards a definite intelligible ideal, such as the Greeks had in the common Doric type with its supporting columns and the super-incumbent architrave. . . . In a Doric Temple the engineering element was small. From the beginning the architect knew that his main plan was sound. . . . They obeyed the basic law in architecture that burden and support should seem a harmony ; there was a perfect adjustment of means to secure the desired end.”

Although the Parthenon was structurally finished in time for the Panathenaic Festival of 438, it was some years before the edifice could be said to be complete. This was specially the case with the sculptural decorations. The work involved may be imagined from the fact that 44 statues ornamented the gables ; of sculptural Metopes there were 92 ; in addition the frieze round the Cella, 523 feet in length and more than 3 feet in width, was covered with sculpture in relief. The name of Phidias is closely connected with everything concerning the Parthenon, and especially with its sculptures, but the Metopes were doubtless fashioned by many different artists. Although all do not attain the same standard of excellence, however, there can be little doubt that nothing was placed in position until it had been approved by the master brain. These Metopes represented the highest degree of relief attainable in marble, many of the figures

standing out to such an extent that they appeared to be independent of their background.

As everybody is aware, the famous Elgin Marbles are largely taken from the Parthenon, the contribution of the Erechtheum being comparatively small. It is claimed, doubtless with truth, that these figures attained to "the highest qualities of sculptural anatomical truth, freedom in the expression of pose and movement, idealized beauty and dignity of form, life-like richness and complexity of drapery."

Lord Elgin, after whom the collection is named, affords a curious instance of a man whose name has been rendered famous by what he probably considered a side issue. He was a diplomatist of some distinction and it was doubtless to his diplomatic career that he looked for such fame as might come to him. It happened, however, that when Envoy-Extraordinary at the Porte between 1799 and 1802 he formed the resolution to remove from the neglected Acropolis at Athens the sculptures now known as the Elgin Marbles. It must be admitted that the permit which he secured at Constantinople was never intended to cover operations on such a scale as Elgin contemplated, and in any event the permission of a Turkish conqueror is not the best title to Grecian works of art. But that said, there remains no reasonable ground for complaint. If Elgin had not removed the marbles it is highly improbable that they would still be in existence, for no one in Greece or Turkey at that time cared anything about them. The Elgin Marbles were purchased by the nation for £36,000 in 1816. But Lord Elgin, I believe, claimed that his outlay considerably exceeded that figure.

Finally, many persons will probably ask, as I did myself, why the Parthenon was erected where it is. It would seem more natural that the great temple should immediately face the point at which entrance is gained to the top of the Acropolis. Several suggestions have been

made in explanation. D'Ooge thus defines a generally accepted view.

" Aside from the economic reasons for rearing the new temple upon these earlier foundations, the architect must have recognized the singularly advantageous location for this structure from what may be called the æsthetic point of view. For this was the highest part of the entire plateau, and a building located here would give the beholder as he entered the sacred precinct from the Propylæa at a single glance the best possible view. This angular view of the Parthenon, to the right of one in passing through the great portal, revealing at once its entire mass and outline, betrays a remarkably well conceived plan."

But this explanation seems to me scarcely to be convincing. It is necessary to recollect that the same site had been chosen for the unfinished Parthenon destroyed by the Persians. Are we to believe that that building also was most effectively seen at an angle? Again, it was necessary to build up the foundation of this site at great expense of labour and material.

After all, the Greek genius was quite capable of designing a temple that would have looked most effective in its natural position in the centre of the hill. As to the height, it would have been less costly to raise the level of the Acropolis at its centre than to carry out the side of the hill in its entirety, as was actually done.

This matter of the, to me, surprising position of the Parthenon may possibly be of the first importance. It clearly involves the interesting point whether the ancient temple of Athena, which had originally stood in the centre of the hill, had been rebuilt. Dörpfeld maintains stoutly that this was the case. Gardner and others produce strong arguments to the contrary. But whether the central temple was rebuilt or not, I am convinced that the central site remained the scene of worship.

It is indeed more than a possibility, to my mind, that the Parthenon was never intended to supersede the ancient temple and was in fact no more than a glorious

edifice entirely associated with the Panathenaic Festival. I find support for this view in the nature of the frieze of the Parthenon, which is wholly devoted to the Festival.

If we accept this view, the true successor of the ancient Temple of Athena was not the Parthenon, but the Erechtheum, of which the design was admittedly influenced by the necessity for leaving untouched the sacred olive tree which was similarly contiguous to the ancient temple.

But, it may be argued, in this case would not the first thought of the Athenians have been the restoration or rebuilding of the ancient temple? Why did the Parthenon take precedence over the Erechtheum? The answer is to be found, I think, in the date of the Panathenaic Festival, which in the intentions of Pericles was to take the form of a national thanksgiving. If the Parthenon was to be completed by 438, when the Festival was due to take place, it was necessary to commence it immediately. The erection of a temple that should replace the ancient site of worship was possibly a more serious, but certainly a less pressing, necessity.

In short, it is my opinion, based upon the position of the Parthenon, that certain highly important religious rites continued to be practised in the ruins of the original temple, or in a temporary structure upon that site, until the Erechtheum was eventually completed and dedicated, probably in 410.

THE PROPYLÆA. The Propylæa was the second of the great structures upon the Acropolis to be completed. Like the Parthenon and Erechtheum, the Propylæa was built of the finest Pentelic marble. At this time the small temple of Athena Nike, which stands to the right of the visitor entering the Acropolis, had already been erected, and to this circumstance, to some extent, may be ascribed the fact that the Propylæa was never finally completed upon the lines originally planned for it. The original drawings are ascribed to the architect Mnesicles.

They probably comprised a great covered hall divided into three aisles by rows of Ionic columns leading up to a portico of six Doric columns from which wings projected at right angles. Behind each wing there was to have been a large chamber, and in the case of the south-western wing this chamber could only have been constructed at the expense of the precinct of Athena Nike. Thus, the intentions of the architect met with opposition and were subsequently frustrated. But even as it has been constructed, the Propylæa was never completed. Both walls and pavement lacked the smooth finish which the architect would have desired, and in many places might be seen projecting bricks designed to assist the builders to rear new blocks into their appropriate positions. The explanation for this state of affairs is to be found in the fact that five years after the structure had been commenced, Athens had become involved in her lengthy and fatal contest with Sparta.

No doubt the intention of the architect when designing the Propylæa was to provide the Sacred Hill with an entrance worthy of the Parthenon and such other buildings as might be erected. There was already in existence an older gateway, but this was dwarfed entirely by the colossal scheme to which undoubtedly Pericles and Phidias assented. As it stood, the Propylæa consisted of a central structure 82 feet long and $57\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide facing west, with two wings flanking the approach on either side. The chief entrance was 24 feet 2 inches high, and 13 feet 8 inches wide. The lintel of this doorway was composed of two blocks of marble about 22 feet long.

It is not without interest that although opposition to the original plans must have manifested itself early in the day, there is nothing to show that the architect modified his intentions in any way whatever. He continued to build precisely as though the original scheme

was to be carried out in its entirety. What secret, one wonders, lies concealed within this fact? Did Pericles hope ultimately to find himself so firmly established in power, as to be able to carry through the original plan unchanged? It would almost appear that this was the case.

The Propylæa as actually built, although falling far short of what was originally intended, is described by D'Ooge as "the largest and most beautiful building of its kind ever erected by the Greeks." It was, however, probably of deliberate intention, without those sculptural decorations upon pediments and metopes which were such a feature of the Parthenon.

It seems possible that in their own day this great structure was at least as much admired as the Parthenon. A prominent citizen of Thebes is said to have told his fellow citizens that if they wished to place themselves on an equality with the Athenians, they should carry the Propylæa to Thebes.

For my own part, I was more greatly impressed by the ruins of the Propylæa than by anything else upon the Acropolis.

THE ERECHTHEUM. Between the commencement of work upon the Propylæa and the Erechtheum there is an interval of some years fraught with far-reaching consequences to the Athenians. The Peloponnesian war had broken out; the citizens of Athens, from the security of their walls, had seen the Spartan armies ravaging their lands; plague had stalked unchecked through the city; and Pericles had died.

It seems probable that the building of the Erechtheum was undertaken during the comparatively quiet years that followed the Peace of Nicias (421 B.C.) and that the completion of the building was delayed by the renewed outbreak of war. In 409 B.C., however, a commission was instructed to report upon the state of the structure



THE ERECHTHEUM, ATHENS

and the temple is said to have been completed in the following year.

Like the Propylæa, the Erechtheum, as constructed, did not carry out the complete intentions of the architect. Yet as it stands it affords the most beautiful example of the Ionic form of architecture. It differs in several respects from the pure Ionic to be found in Asia Minor and from the later and more conventional examples of the order. Its influence, however, upon succeeding architecture has been greater than that exerted either by the Parthenon or the Propylæa.

The feature with which this structure is popularly associated, the "Caryatids" of the southern portico, has curiously enough aroused a certain amount of criticism. It has been argued that the figures of these maidens are out of place when used as supports for a heavy roof. It is necessary to recollect, however, that even to-day women in the Near East are accustomed to carry heavy weights upon the head, and so far from representing a bizarre effort of imagination these figures are in entire harmony with the circumstances of life as they were when the temple was erected. It was a similar Caryatid from the northern portico that was carried off by Lord Elgin and which may be seen to-day in the British Museum. When this portico was rebuilt to a certain extent between 1838 and 1846, the missing figure was replaced by a terra-cotta cast. I have in my possession an interesting photograph taken by M. Ziffo, showing one of these figures as it was after restoration. I understand, however, that the restoration was not approved and that the figure is once again in a mutilated condition.

The main entrance to the Erechtheum was through the northern porch, which may be due to the fact that the Pandroseion to the west of the building contained features of religious significance such as the sacred olive tree of Athena, which could not be moved. Thus the

plan of the Erechtheum is extremely unusual. The eastern portion of the building consists of a cella, oblong in shape, faced by six Ionic columns. At the back of this cella at a lower level was a chamber opening on to the main corridor which passed from the northern to the southern portico.

It was the eastern cella which contained the ancient wooden image of Athena Polias, possibly the most venerated possession of the Athenians. Where this figure came from originally it is now impossible to say, since we are no longer permitted to accept the tradition that it fell from Heaven. If we may believe the statement of Plutarch (*Themis*, 10) this statue was taken by the Athenians to Salamis at the time of the Persian invasion and thus escaped the destruction visited upon the Acropolis. The western of the two chambers was dedicated to the worship of Erechtheus.

The Erechtheum in its name carries on the age-long worship of Erechtheus who even in Homer's time is credited with sharing the Temple of Athena upon the Acropolis. To what extent the worship of Erechtheus differed from that of the goddess is, however, unknown. Erechtheus was in tradition the sixth king of Athens. Inspired by an oracle, he sacrificed a daughter to obtain victory in a war against Eleusis. In the same war he struck down Eumolpus, Neptune's son, and the sea-god in revenge prompted Jupiter to hurl a thunderbolt at him. He is said to have received divine honours after his death in 1347 B.C. However, the connection between Erechtheus and the Erechtheum is very vague, and little can be said upon the subject.

OTHER MONUMENTS

Whilst the cult of Athena was paramount upon the Acropolis, it did not preclude the worship of other deities. Behind the wing of the Propylaea, devotees of the Brauro-

nian Artemis indulged in the rites of that ancient religion. Artemis was the goddess of childbirth, and her votaries in early times were girls clad in bear-skins. Had the Propylæa been constructed as originally planned it would have extended over the site dedicated to this form of primitive worship. It may even be the case that the design of the Propylæa was originally influenced by this consideration.

A statue by Scopas paid honour to Aphrodite Pandemos. Ge, the Earth Goddess, Pan, Zeus, Apollo, Hera and Hermes, all were honoured by statues or altars. But to the Athenian the Acropolis was essentially the centre of the worship of Athena, who was not merely a goddess but, as it were, the personification of his city.

Much has been written of the monuments erected upon the Acropolis to national heroes depicting legendary scenes. I will not, however, touch upon this subject except to make the obvious remark that a reconstruction of the Acropolis, for which I think there is a case, must necessarily be very incomplete since these great works are now lost to us for all time. One statue, however, that of Athena Promachos, must certainly be mentioned. This was the great bronze statue of the goddess executed by Phidias. It stood in all probability upon the square platform which is to be seen cut in the rock a little way behind the Propylæa, and possesses a special interest as the first recorded work of the great sculptor. The height of the statue itself cannot have been less than 25 feet and it must have appeared to dominate Athens. Pausanias tells us it was visible from the sea. This work is thought by many to be identical with that described by the Byzantine historian Nicetas as having been set up subsequently in the Forum at Constantinople and there destroyed in a riot in A.D. 1203.

The subsequent history of the Acropolis may be dealt with briefly. During the Byzantine period the Parthenon

and Erechtheum are turned into Christian churches, and in 1018 the Emperor Basil II attends a service in the Parthenon to return thanks for the Divine mercy that had enabled him to overcome the Bulgarian invaders and incidentally to blind 15,000 of his prisoners. Thus, matters remained until in 1458 the Acropolis was taken by the Turkish soldiers of the Sultan Mahammed II. The rule of the Turks was probably preferred by the Greeks to that of their fellow-Christians. At any rate, the Mahomedans for some time administered the country with leniency and in religious matters were much more tolerant. During this period in its history, the Parthenon was transformed into a mosque, a minaret being added at its south-western corner in 1466. The Turkish governor resided in the Propylæa and his harem occupied the Erechtheum. Up to this time the loss of the Acropolis had been chiefly in its movable statues. In 1645, however, a small powder magazine exploded within the Propylæa and destroyed the upper portion of that structure.

A few years later, in 1687, there came the invasion of a Venetian army under Francesco Morosini. After successes in the Peloponnesus the Venetians occupied Athens and settled down to the siege of the Turkish troops upon the Acropolis.

The attack was first directed against the Propylæa where the Turks had their strongest batteries.

“Two batteries were erected,” Finlay tells us, “one at the foot of the Museum, and the other near the Pnyx. Mortars were planted under cover of the Areopagus, but their fire proving uncertain, two more were placed under cover of the buildings of the town, near the north-east corner of the rock, which threw their shells at a high angle, with a low charge, into the Acropolis.”

These measures were so far successful that on the 25th September a Venetian shell blew up a small powder magazine in the Propylæa. Then, unhappily, the Vene-

tians were informed that the main powder magazine of their enemy was housed in the Parthenon and from that moment the ancient temple became the target for their guns. The successful shot which finally exploded the powder and wrecked the Parthenon is said to have been fired by a German gunner in Venetian employ. The destruction effected by this shot was colossal, about 200 of the defenders perished out of hand. The Turks, however, gallantly held their post for some days afterwards.

The Venetian occupation was a short one. The Hanoverian troops which had assisted the Venetians had gone home; plague showed itself in the Morea, and the enemy was still at hand. On the 31st December it was decided to evacuate Athens. It was a very near thing that the Acropolis did not depart with the Venetians. The destruction of the walls, involving probably the loss of all that they contain, was seriously discussed. But in the anxiety consequent upon the appearance of the plague and the presence of a large and homeless civilian population, the question was fortunately lost sight of. None the less, Morosini, aware that a theft from the Parthenon was considered a necessary corollary to a victory at Athens, endeavoured to remove the statue of Neptune and the Chariot of Victory which adorned the western pediment of the Parthenon. Less fortunate than some of his predecessors, however, his men only succeeded in letting them fall, a disaster that shivered them to pieces. Nothing illustrates more forcibly the degeneracy of the Greeks at this point of their history than this siege of a Turkish-held Acropolis by a Venetian army. The population of Athens at this time was about 10,000 souls.

The campaign of Morosini directed the attention of art collectors to a city that had been almost forgotten by the world, and there now set in an era of polite theft in which the English showed to great advantage.

By 1822 the Independence movement had made head-

way within Greece and the insurgents had captured the Acropolis, but in 1827 the Turks bombarded and retook the hill once again. The Turks now remained in possession until 1833 when the kingdom of Greece was recognized by the Sultan.

It is almost inevitable that the question whether it is possible to reconstruct the temples upon the Acropolis should occur to the mind of anyone who has seen them. Personally, I have no doubt that the task would be possible. The researches of the archæologists suffice to tell us with more or less accuracy the form and dimensions of the main buildings. We know also the position occupied by a few of the more famous statues. But here our knowledge ends, and an attempt to replace the sculptured figures which once graced this spot would inevitably fail.

Generally speaking, the appearance of an ancient building in a modern setting is far from satisfactory, and I do not think that an attempt to set up the Parthenon elsewhere than upon the Acropolis can be anything but a failure. At any rate, the more or less exact replica of this building which was erected at Nashville, Tennessee, is, I believe, almost a "white elephant." As regards the Propylæa, Erechtheum and Parthenon, however, these buildings stand high above the level of the city and their beauty would not be endangered by comparison with modern structures.

To consider such a reconstruction in anything but Pentelic marble is, of course, out of the question, and here it is possible that difficulties might be encountered. I was told in Athens that the quarries are almost exhausted. If that should be the case the question of reconstruction may be dismissed at once. But even were the marble forthcoming, the new portions of the buildings would be noticeable, from the absence of that delightful mellow tint which this marble takes with age.

When everything is considered, therefore, it would not appear desirable to attempt a reconstruction. I doubt also whether a reconstructed Parthenon would afford the same delight as the half-ruined building. Certainly it could not appeal in the same way to the imagination. It is indeed difficult to see what would be gained from this effort.

As it stands, the Acropolis is universally admitted to be one of the sights of the world. It may be said that it holds little or nothing in reserve for the man who has studied it in picture—that everything is precisely as we should expect to find it. But this is but one part of the truth. Little by little the appeal of the place makes itself felt. The Acropolis ceases to be a ruin and by degrees takes shape as a centre of History and Art. The past hangs about it like some vivid garment and clothes the broken stones with beauty. We are conscious that here in glorious retirement live the Greek Gods; that here in their shattered temples they still receive the homage of mankind.

THE TEMPLE OF OLYMPIAN ZEUS

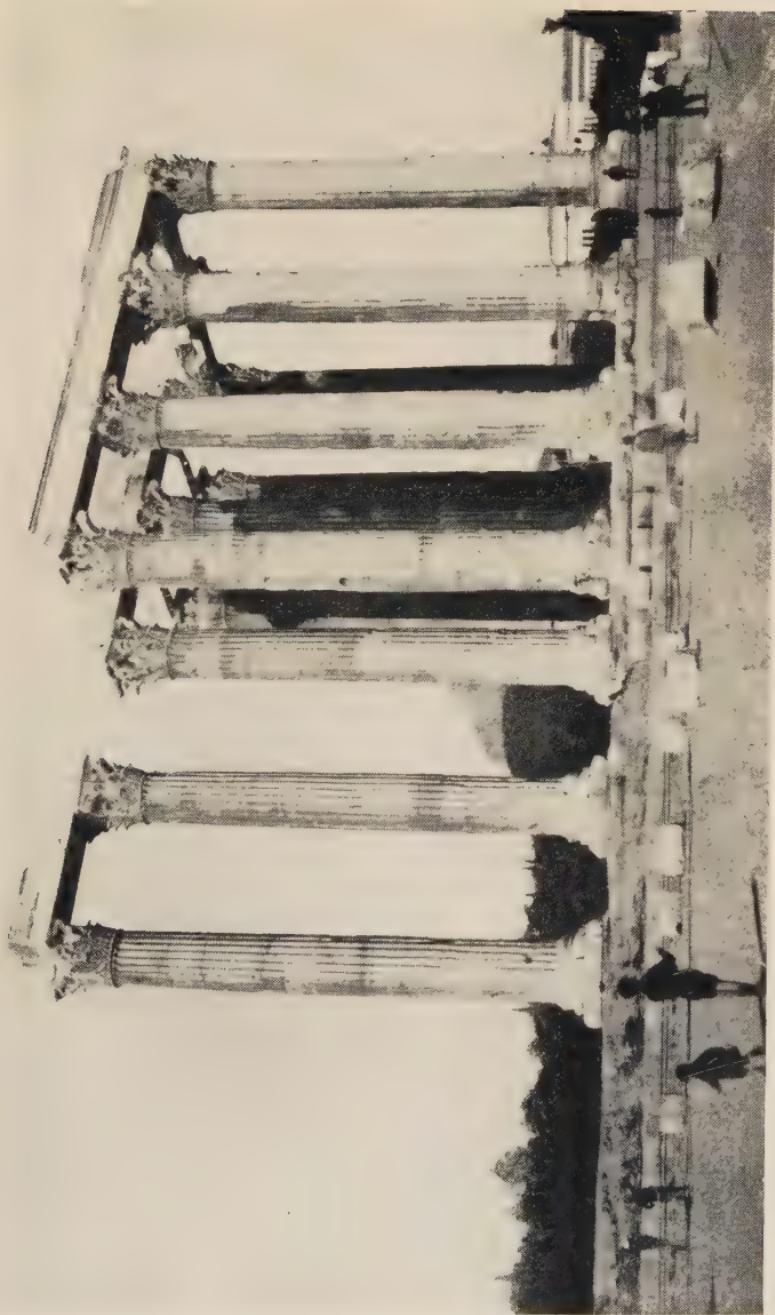
Of all the great monuments which I visited in Greece I am inclined to place as easily first in the appeal which they made to me, the gigantic columns of the Temple of Olympian Zeus. Individuals differ, and archæologists view these matters from their own, and more instructed, standpoint. I believe, however, that the majority of visitors will agree with me that the site of the Temple of Olympian Zeus, when once it has been visited, is never forgotten. For my own part, I never became tired of this spot, and my evening walk more often than not took me to those wonderful Corinthian columns which stretch towards the sky like some hopeless aspiration.

There is something uncommon about the very history of this Temple, planned as it was upon an immense scale

by Pisistratus between five and six hundred years before Christ and completed upon equally great but very different lines by a Roman Emperor nearly 700 years later. It is curious that the Greeks themselves should have had so little to do with this work : for the original conception was never carried out, and for hundreds of years the site appears to have remained very much as the Athenian "tyrant" left it. How came it, we wonder, that Pericles and Phidias ignored it ? Probably the explanation lies in the fact that the Persian invasion had focussed attention upon the ruined Acropolis, the very home of Athena. At any rate, whatever the explanation may be, the temple remained a pious hope unfulfilled until, of all unlikely people, an Asiatic monarch, Antiochus IV, known as Epiphanes, King of Syria, in 174 B.C. took up the great work where Pisistratus had left it. It seems to have been ordained from the first that the Greeks were to have no share in this temple ; even the architect of Antiochus was a Roman citizen, by name Cossutius.

In Antiochus the brilliant and the mad overlapped. He was at once the glory and the scandal of his friends. He appears to have had a genuine regard for Greek culture, just as he had a genuine hatred for everything Jewish, but his plans for the great temple were probably but the outcome of his mental peculiarities. However, the work was commenced upon a scale that astonished the world. How much of the temple was finished before the death of Antiochus brought the project to an end, at least for many years, is not certain. It is probable that the majority, if not all, of the great Corinthian columns which stood in a double colonnade surrounding the temple had been placed in position. But whatever the facts may be, the site again stood abandoned. There was much more to gaze at, but for all practical purposes the temple had still to be built.

Then followed the campaign of Sulla consequent upon



TEMPLE OF OLYMPIAN ZEUS, ATHENS

the support given by the Athenians to Mithridates VI, who aimed at driving the Romans from Asia Minor and who was himself defeated. Sulla, unfortunately for Athens, combined a taste in art with his considerable military genius. At any rate, after the sack of Athens in 86 B.C. he is said to have carried some of the columns of the still unfinished temple to Rome. For the next two centuries the temple remained as Sulla had left it, unfinished, broken, an appeal to the gods. Then, with Hadrian, came its days of glory, and somewhere about A.D. 130 the great edifice was finally completed. Hadrian was undoubtedly attached to Athens where more than one great work stood to his credit. But the completion of the Temple of Olympian Zeus was not necessarily a tribute to Athens. After all, the same Emperor ordered the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

As completed, the great temple must have been one of the wonders of the world. It far outdistanced anything to be seen upon the Acropolis. Of the gigantic Corinthian columns, of which to-day but fifteen remain, there were originally 104 arrayed in double rows upon the north and south sides of the edifice and in triple rows at either end. These columns were $56\frac{1}{2}$ feet high and are undoubtedly the finest example of the Corinthian order extant. The temple itself, with two exceptions, was the largest Greek temple known to us, its dimensions being about $353\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length by $134\frac{1}{2}$ feet in breadth. Within the temple were to be seen a colossal gold and ivory statue of Zeus and a statue of Hadrian himself.

Of the decay of the Olympieum we know next to nothing. Doubtless, it shared the fate of other Athenian temples and provided for one man a statue, for another a column and for a third some useful blocks of stone. To-day only a few columns remain, lonely, beautiful beyond the ordinary, without hope.

THE THEATRE OF DIONYSUS

The precinct of Dionysus, or Bacchus, once included, in addition to the great theatre now one of the sights of Athens, two temples and a colonnade which stood between the theatre and the modern road. The theatre, which has been much written about, was first excavated by the Germans in 1862. It is of great size and would have held an audience of 15,000 persons ; Gardner, indeed, suggests 20,000 persons. Having tried the seats for myself, however, I should have preferred not to have been of the number. The front row of 67 chairs of Pentelic marble are in a very different category. These, of course, were intended for magistrates, archons and other persons of importance. The carved arm-chair in the centre of the row was occupied by the priest of Eleutherian Dionysus. It is still possible to see in the pavement the holes in which were placed the supports for the awning that covered the head of this dignitary. Whether the marble seats were a part of the original theatre or were added when the theatre was partially rebuilt by Hadrian, is not certain. The inscriptions carved on the seats of the arm-chairs have in many cases superseded older inscriptions and in any event date mostly from the Roman period.

As is the case with all the Greek theatres, the acoustic properties of the place are still astonishingly good, although they have probably suffered from the loss of the intermediate seats. The seats are divided transversely by cuts in their front surface which Gardner regards as defining the space allowed to each spectator. However, this amounts only to about 13 inches, and it is possible that an estimate of the seating capacity of the theatre calculated upon this basis would be misleading. Gardner himself appreciates the inconvenience of a 13-inch seat, but adds that "the Athenians in other

matters, such as the length or continuity of the performances, were capable of enduring what would seem intolerable even to the most enthusiastic audiences of the present day." None the less there must have been a point at which even an Athenian would protest.

The stage and the orchestra as we find them to-day date only from the Roman period. In the fourth century it is probable that the orchestra consisted of hard earth. It is, however, a disputed point whether in those early days the play was performed on ground level or upon a raised proscenium. D'Ooge thus sums up the issue.

" The chief point at issue . . . turns upon the question whether what Dörpfeld restores as the proscenium was simply the background for the actors standing in the orchestra, or whether this proscenium supported and enclosed a platform or stage about 12 feet high and 10 feet wide for the actors to stand on."

The reliefs upon the face of the well-preserved stage date from the time of Nero and depict on one panel the birth of Dionysus, on another a rustic sacrifice to the god, and on a third some allegorical subject. The stooping figures of Silenus upon which the stage rests belong, however, to an earlier period.

THE PRISON OF SOCRATES—THE AREOPAGUS— THE THESIUM

Visitors on leaving the Acropolis are usually conducted by local guides to the so-called "Prison of Socrates." This is one of many rock chambers to be found about the Pnyx, the Hill of the Nymphs and the Museum Hill. The cave associated with the name of Socrates consists of three chambers and was probably excavated in the first instance for use as a tomb. It is possible, however, that this and similar caves were used as dwellings at a later date. It is highly improbable that Socrates was confined here.

The Areopagus, close at hand, is chiefly of interest as the scene of St. Paul's address to the Athenians. Athens in St. Paul's day was but a shadow of its former self. There is no reason to doubt that this spot was visited by the Apostle to the Gentiles.

The Thesium, the best preserved Greek temple in the world, is far less impressive than the ruins of the Parthenon. To some extent this is due to the modern setting in which this temple is seen, but in any event the proportions of the structure are by no means so perfect. Considerable doubt exists regarding the origin of the Thesium. It is built throughout of Pentelic marble, the foundation excepted, and the date of 421 B.C. is advanced as that at which it was probably completed. The name Thesium was given to the temple in the Middle Ages on account of some of the sculptures which deal with the exploits of Theseus. However, it is now generally accepted that the temple was dedicated to one of the gods.

The Thesium is of the Doric order, 104 feet in length, 45½ feet in breadth. Its height to the top of the pediment is 33 feet. The plan of the interior is that customary in Greek temples and does not include a second chamber as is the case with the Parthenon. The subjects of the sculptures are, in the metopes, the exploits of Heracles and Theseus; in the frieze, a combat with some gigantic or savage enemy who cannot be identified, and the battle of the Greeks and Centaurs; in the pediments, groups which have completely disappeared.

Gardner concludes his examination of the rival claims made for the Thesium as follows:

“If, then, we infer that the identification of the ‘Thesium’ as the temple of Heracles in Melite is perhaps the most probable among the attempts that have been made to give it a place among the temples recorded in Athens, this opinion must be qualified by the reservation that it is quite possible no classical writer has happened to refer to this temple or to record its name.”

Like the Parthenon, the Thesium was for a time in use as a Christian Church, but fortunately it suffered less in the transformation than many other temples similarly treated.

THE STADIUM

The modern stadium is a restoration in marble of the ancient stadium, laid out by Lycourgos about 330 B.C., as renewed by Herodes Atticus in A.D. 148. During the long period throughout which Athens was lost to Eastern Europe, the Stadium fell into ruins. But in 1896, M. Averoff, a wealthy Greek of Alexandria, undertook to restore the site at his own expense. The building, completed at a cost of about £160,000, was the scene of the revived Olympic Games on its completion in April 1906. The length of the arena is about 223 yards, and the breadth about 36 yards. The winning post is marked by two hermæ, one of which was discovered, the other, I believe, being modern.

The seats of this structure, which is unique of its kind, accommodate 50,000 spectators. The original intention of the rock tunnel to be found at the further end on the visitor's left, as he makes his way up the arena, is not known, although it is conjectured that the Stadium may have been used in olden times for wild beast shows, in which connection the tunnel had its uses.

The Stadium as it stands is extremely interesting as an accurate representation of a stadium in Roman times, and it is impossible not to appreciate the public-spirited generosity of the donor. But as regards its practical value, I am, I fear, a sceptic. The world has moved on since the great days of the Olympic Festival, and it is improbable in my opinion that contests of a kind suitable to the Stadium will ever again awake great interest on their merits.

THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL MUSEUM

The National Archæological Museum is a building to which the tourist should be prepared to devote several days. Unfortunately a visit to this wonderful place is frequently sandwiched between a tour of the Acropolis and a lunch at the Grande Bretagne, and I have frequently wondered why in such circumstances tourists ever trouble to go there. But if time can be spared, the National Museum at Athens is an education in itself. Here may be found relics of every age, golden ornaments fashioned when civilization was in its infancy, and Mycenæ was a Power ; statues carved when the Athenian Empire was at its zenith ; works of art produced in the days of Rome. Every period of Grecian civilization is represented in these exhibits, discovered under the soil, amidst ancient foundations, in graves—under the sea. It is indeed a wonderful collection, to which disinterested archæologists of every race have contributed their quota.

CHAPTER IV

THE PIRÆUS

“The deliverance of Greece came at this time from the sea, and her galleys restored Athens again after it was destroyed.”—
PLUTARCH (“Themistocles”).

THE first impression of the Piræus is not altogether a happy one. The magnificent approach, the mountains of the Peloponnesus, the distant view of Athens and the blue and sunlit sea have given place to the squalid surroundings of industry. Steamers of all nationalities lie with their sterns towards the shore, which reveals nothing more enticing than quays crowded with boatmen who appear to live in a state of constant antagonism with each other. Beyond the quay and warehouses may be seen uninviting streets, and houses without distinction. Piræus is indeed essentially a port and not a good one at that. Possibly the weak point of the port in the opinion of the tourist is the fact that vessels are unable to lie alongside the quay. I was told that this is due to some understanding with the boatmen who make a living ferrying passengers to the shore. As to that I cannot speak, but whatever the cause may be, the result is sufficiently annoying. As the ship anchors, small boats by the score put off from the quay and the Greek passenger may be seen leaning over the rail volubly arranging terms for the transport of himself and his baggage over the few yards of water that separate the ship from the Custom House.

The most convenient course for the tourist to pursue, is to request the agency at which he takes his tickets to

advise their representative in Athens of the steamer upon which he is arriving. In such cases a representative meets the boat and all is well. Failing such an arrangement, it is advisable to strike a bargain with the boatman before leaving the steamer. A good boatman is a treasure, but the majority of boatmen in Greece, in my experience, do not come under that heading, and the tourist in the last resort must trust to his own initiative and resource to pull him through.

From the point of view of the shipper and the ship-owner, Piræus leaves much to be desired. Complaints of congestion both in the harbour and upon the quays are continual. I heard when I was last in Athens, that the British Chamber of Commerce in the capital had appointed a committee to make a few suggestions, and one can only hope that their report will receive the attention it merits. Danger to vessels from congestion in the port is constant, and the shortage of warehouses and cranes results in goods being left in lighters for long periods with inevitable loss from climatic conditions and theft. However, new works are in hand and although progress is slow there is reason to hope that Piræus may one day be worthy of its steadily increasing importance.

The real trouble at Piræus is that the facilities of the port have not of recent years kept pace with the truly astonishing increase in trade which has occurred throughout Greece. For while it is true that Greece is well supplied with natural harbours, the flow of imports for the most part passes through Piræus in the south and Salonica in the north.¹ Of these ports, Piræus is at present easily the most important, the figures for 1923 being, in millions of drachmas, 3,233 and 1,215 respectively. For the first nine months of 1924, the figures were 2,795 and 1,072. No other Greek port, so far as imported goods are concerned, can compare with

¹ The figures that follow are the most recent available in May 1927.

Piræus and Salonica. In the matter of exports the position is necessarily different, the port of export depending to a considerable extent upon the nature of the produce to be exported, but in any event the figures are comparatively small. Quoting once more in millions of drachmas, Cavalla heads the list with, in 1923, 552 or in the first nine months of 1924, 484; Cavalla, we may note, is a tobacco exporting centre. Salonica with tobacco and general cargo comes third with 275 in 1923 and 201 over the same period of 1924. Piræus is sixth on the list with general cargoes, reaching in value 150 in 1923, and 144 over the first nine months of 1924. From these figures it will be seen that Greece purchases abroad very much more than she sells and that the bulk of the purchases reach the country through Piræus.

As regards water-borne passenger traffic, Piræus is, of course, the gateway to Greece. The Trieste-Lloyd Co., with its admirable services to and from Italy, Constantinople and the Levant, would alone make Piræus a port of first-class importance to the traveller. But other services are run from Piræus under the British flag to Alexandria and elsewhere. Greek steamers again sail daily from Piræus to Greek and Italian ports.

Communication between Piræus and Athens is excellent or indifferent according to whether or not the traveller has baggage with him. With luggage it saves endless trouble to take a car from the port to one's hotel in Athens. The road is extremely bad in parts, but the Greek driver is thoroughly familiar with it and in the course of half an hour or so the traveller will find himself safely at his destination. Without luggage to bother about, the traveller can safely avail himself of the electric railway linking up the capital with Piræus. The journey, only 10 km. in length, is performed in a few minutes and the trains are frequent and by no means uncomfortable.

Motoring from Piræus to Athens, the road leads across

the front of Phaleron, the seaside resort of the capital. This is the same Phaleron that was the Athenian port before the genius of Themistocles replaced it by Piræus. Pausanias thus refers to this development :

“ Piræus was a township from of old, but before the Archonship of Themistocles it was not a seaport. Down to that time Phaleron was the port of Athens, it being the point of the coast nearest to the city. But when Themistocles was appointed Archon he made Piræus the port of Athens, because it seemed to him to lie more conveniently for navigation and to have three harbours instead of the single one at Phaleron.”

In discarding the nearer and more conveniently situated Phaleron for Piræus, Themistocles showed a wonderful appreciation of the requirements of the situation. It is easy for the traveller with all history to instruct him to appreciate the immense advantages of the new harbour. But when the choice was made, Themistocles had little to help him beyond his own theories which were the outcome of his common sense. The fortifications which he erected and the arsenal and docks which he built were the necessary complement to the great fleet of warships which gave Athens victory over her enemies. But it required a Themistocles to appreciate that fact in the days when the fleet was built.

It is not without interest that the town of Piræus, as originally designed by Hippodamus, was the first town of which we have record, to adopt a rectangular system of streets. It is an interesting thought that this development, which we usually associate with the highly modern towns of the United States, must have been a subject of discussion between Themistocles and Hippodamus, slightly more than two thousand three hundred years ago.

Athens and the Piræus are so commonly thought of as complementary one to another that one recollects with astonishment that Themistocles is said to have proposed to settle the Athenians finally in Piræus and to leave

Athens a deserted ruin. As a matter of military policy the Athenian statesman was almost certainly right. The alternative scheme, and the one finally adopted, postulated the erection of great fortified walls from the capital to the port. This measure secured to Athens the approach to the sea, but it cannot be disputed that it vastly added to her liabilities in the matter of defence. None the less, the visitor who hurries from Piræus to the present Greek capital will be glad that matters turned out as they did, for there is little or nothing in Piræus, beyond the formation of the harbour, that anyone will desire to recollect.

The history of Piræus since Themistocles may be dismissed in a word. After a period of greatness it shared the declining fortunes of Athens, and in 86 B.C. it was almost entirely destroyed by Sulla. For many centuries only the dwellings of a few fishermen served to indicate the great naval port of years gone by. But Athens coming once again into its own, the port took on a new lease of life; and for so long as carriage by sea constitutes the most economical method of moving goods, it must continue to flourish.

CHAPTER V

ANCIENT CORINTH

"It is, indeed, wonderful how Corinth did not acquire and maintain the first place in Greece. It may, perhaps, have done so in the days of Periander, . . . but whenever the relations of the various powers become clear . . . we find Corinth always at the head of the second rate states, and never among the first."

—MAHAFFY.

THE traveller who views the seven Doric columns which to-day mark the site of ancient Corinth, will find it extremely difficult to conjure up any vision of the past, for the tide of Corinthian prosperity has long since ebbed, leaving no trace of those glories which once covered this spot.

The domains of the city in its greatest days extended from Mount Geraneia, which stretched almost completely across the Isthmus, in the north west, to the frontier of Argolis in the south, and from the territory of Sicyon and Phliasia in the west to the Saronic Gulf in the east. The city itself lay about a mile and a half from the Gulf of Corinth in a great plain beneath the shelter of a solitary mountain, the famous Acrocorinthus, nineteen hundred feet high. Upon Acrocorinthus stood the Acropolis or citadel from which might be viewed the wealthy city below, and the long roads connecting it with the ports of Cenchreæ on the Saronic Gulf and Lechæum on the Gulf of Corinth. Thus it happened that Corinth controlled the highway between the Peloponnesus and Northern Greece, while her shipping could trade with equal facility to the East and to the West.

The legendary founder of Corinth was that Sisyphus, who, for betraying a love affair of Zeus, was condemned in Hades perpetually to roll a heavy stone up a slope. Dismissing the legendary, however, we know that the Dorians pushing ever farther and farther south at last reached the Peloponnesus where, thrusting aside the previous occupants, they settled themselves in Corinth under Aletes. For five generations the family of Aletes retained the monarchy, but at the close of that period a revolution destroyed the reigning house and substituted for the monarchy, government by a great family, the Bacchiadæ.

By this time the Dorians had settled down in the new territory, trade had opened up and Corinth was becoming a city of importance. About 655 B.C. the government was once again overthrown, this time by a man of good birth, who had acquired popularity amongst the mob. Cypselus, the new-comer, substituted his own rule for that of the Bacchiadæ and became known in history as the first of the "tyrants." The term "tyrant" is possibly an unfortunate one in view of the meaning we have attached to the word. The "tyrants" were merely despotic rulers who owed their power to usurpation, the description applying to the status of the ruler and not to the use or abuse of his power. This fact is frequently overlooked, so that the "tyrants" who for a time sprang up at a number of different points within Greece, are collectively damned by reason of the epithet, although the historian will grudgingly remark that this or that individual tyrant was an intelligent and by no means an oppressive ruler. Whether Cypselus was a tyrant in the modern sense of the word, is at least open to doubt. Herodotus tells us that he banished many of the Corinthians, deprived many of their property and many more of life. But the same description would apply to Oliver Cromwell. At any rate, we know that

Cypselus died a normal death in 625 B.C. and handed over his power unimpaired to his son Periander.

It would be interesting, did space permit, to deal with the career of Periander at some length. Certainly few men, by reason of their faults and achievements, excite curiosity to a similar extent, and no more interesting employment could be imagined than to disentangle what is true from the astonishing reputation which this strange character has left behind him. The question "Was he a good man?" so beloved of English people, can be dismissed in a word. No merely good man in his position could have achieved anything, and Periander left Corinth the greatest city in Greece. Yet we doubt whether his character was as hopelessly black as it has sometimes been painted.

As a husband he left something to be desired, for he certainly killed his wife. As a parent he seems to have lacked proper feeling, at any rate he neglects one son and banishes the other. As a ruler he was scarcely ideal, for he destroyed those wealthy citizens who might have conspired against him, and maintained his power with the assistance of foreign mercenaries. Nor is this all, for Corinth during the tyranny became the most luxurious and most immoral of the Grecian cities, and this fact also is laid to his account. But we doubt if this is the whole story. With his initial dispute with Melissa we are not concerned, except to note that his feud with his son was the direct result of it. For when the son learned of his mother's death, he declined in any circumstances to treat Periander except as an enemy. No effort that Periander could make could overcome this decision and in delivering the sentence of banishment,¹ Periander appears merely to have bowed to the inevitable. Similarly in his dealings with possible rivals, he must, to a large extent, have been influenced by a recollection of the

¹ He was made Governor of Corcyra (Corfu).

rebellion that had placed his father in the seat of government. Abuse of power of this sort was inherent in the position. As to the foreign mercenaries, these, we fancy, he would have justified on the ground that they made for success in those wars which carried Corinth to a height she had never before attained, and to which, we may note, she was never again to aspire. There remains the charge of encouraging immorality. Aphrodite, it is true, had at Corinth her famous temple thronged by sacred slaves and courtesans. But what is wicked in one age is reasonable and even meritorious in another, and in any event, Periander is said to have "collected all the procuresses he could find and drowned them in the sea."

In short, we do not agree that a man of this type can properly be judged by traits of character exhibited in circumstances utterly foreign to us. We cannot judge the man because we have no standard which can be so adjusted as to permit of a reasonably accurate measurement. We are, in short, flung back upon his achievements and these were not inconsiderable.

It is interesting to note that in the middle of the seventh century the Eubœan cities, Chalcis and Eretria, were commercially the most important in Greece. Fifty years later Corinth and Aegina were rapidly replacing them. Periander had found a useful ally in Thrasybulus, the powerful tyrant of Miletus, and the foreign policy of Corinth was stretching farther and farther afield. Even in Egypt, Periander had his friendships with the monarchs, Necho and Psammetichus II. It was probably the example of the former that suggested to Periander the great design of a canal through the isthmus of Corinth. Unfortunately for the Corinthian tyrant, he could not command the vast number of slaves which were required to make this project an economic possibility. None the less we can gather some idea of the man from the fact that he was prepared to essay this task.

Balked, however, of the Corinth Canal, Periander actually carried through the smaller canal at Leucas which afforded a shorter and safer passage between Corinth and its colonies in the North-West.

It is not actually known that Periander or his father constructed the great temple of which seven columns are still to be seen. It is, however, more than probable that this was the case. "It was Corinth under her tyrants that first erected a temple in Greece proper," writes Stobart. "This grave and splendid style of architecture was very probably based upon Egyptian models, but with characteristically Greek modifications." Corinth during these years is indeed credited with more than one contribution to the development of architecture.

Finally, both at Delphi and Olympia, treasure-houses and the richest gifts bore evidence to the wealth and power of Corinth under the Cypselids.

Psammetichus, who succeeded his uncle in 579 B.C., was soon assassinated and with him died the tyranny, and what promised to become the Empire of Corinth. An aristocracy of merchants succeeded the dictators, and Corinth assumed the position she was to occupy for many years as a centre of great commercial importance and a city of uncommon luxury and wealth. But politically, for better or worse, Corinth was never again to stand in the front rank.

The Persian invasion which took place in 480 B.C. did not greatly affect Corinth, the fighting taking place in Northern Greece. Corinth, however, gains a certain amount of fame as the meeting-place of a Pan-Hellenic Congress to decide upon measures of resistance. It is Athens and Sparta, however, who assume the leadership, Corinth being chosen as the seat of the Congress by reason of its convenient position. None the less, Corinthians were present at the battle of Thermopylæ, although it was the Spartans who won immortal fame there.



CORINTH, SHOWING COLUMNS OF TEMPLE OF APOLLO

Corinthians also were present in the naval battle of Salamis, which destroyed the Persian fleet, and, for the time being, delivered Greece from the barbarians. A simple distich upon a stone at Salamis marks the resting place of those who were not to return. "Salamis, the isle of Ajax, holds us now, who once dwelled in the city of Corinth between her waters."

In 461 B.C. Athens, now the leading maritime power in Greece, allied herself with Megara, who possessed ports on both sides of the Isthmus. Corinth, feeling herself menaced, in conjunction with Epidauros and Aegina, declared war upon her powerful rival. Through all these years we notice the "self-sufficient" attitude of the Greek cities. Occasionally for a few months, under the pressure of foreign invasions, they appear a solid entity, only however to fall apart once more the moment that pressure is removed.

In this war the Corinthians had the worst of the fighting, the Corinthian fleet being frequently defeated. Athens, however, had its hands full elsewhere, and in 445 B.C. the Thirty Years Truce brought Corinth out of its difficulties upon fairly satisfactory terms. For a time peace is the order of the day and when Samos revolts against Athens and applies to the Peloponnesian cities for help it is Corinth who throws her influence into the Athenian scale and causes the demand to be rejected.

The Corinthian merchants can never have regarded war with enthusiasm, neither had they the Spartan disposition to endure the unenjoyable. They were, however, accessible to the demands of commerce and it was probably some such consideration that led the city into its next great war on the subject of Corcyra, the important island now known as Corfu. This island, once a colony of Corinth, had rapidly increased in wealth and power and for some time the suzerainty of Corinth had been almost nominal. But Corinth regarded Corcyra as important

both in itself and as commanding the route westward to Tarentum and Syracuse and was not prepared to witness the growth of a formidable rival where the ties of kinship had promised a friend. As so frequently happens, however, the ostensible cause of the trouble took no account of the factors which were really bringing about the struggle. Commercial rivalry and commercial interest remained decently in the background and in 435 B.C. all Corinth and all Corcyra burned with indignation over the abominable state of things in the quite unimportant party feuds of Epidamnos, for of the rival parties in that Isthmus, one had been promised the support of Corinth and one of Corcyra. Corinth sent a garrison to the democrats and Corcyra sent a fleet and blockaded the garrison. A naval battle in which the Corinthians were defeated by a Corcyrean fleet superior in numbers, roused Corinth to great efforts and every preparation was made to deal with Corcyra once and for all. At this juncture, Corcyra appealed to Athens for help, and Corcyrean and Corinthian envoy appeared before the Assembly of Athens at the same moment. Corinth had a wholesome respect for the Athenian navy and the position was a critical one. Undoubtedly the island envoys had the best of the argument. The Corinthians, they suggested, were all-powerful with the Lacedæmonians and "the Lacedæmonians are eager to take up arms against you. . . . If the Corinthians seize our fleet and make it one with their own, you will have to fight against the united navies of Corcyra and the Peloponnesus." To drag the rest of the Peloponnesus into a dispute in which they were not yet engaged was a clever move and the Athenians were influenced by the threat. Better fight Corinth to-day than all the Peloponnesus to-morrow. So Athens sided with Corcyra, the anti-war party being appeased by the undertaking that the alliance should be simply a defensive one. Somebody,

we think, must have permitted himself a smile when this nice distinction was advanced—was there ever an offensive action that could not be justified on the ground that it afforded the best measure of defence? Thus arose the Peloponnesian war which, before it could be extinguished, was to raise issues beside which the state of the democratic party in Epidamnos was to appear a small affair.

But indeed the affair in Epidamnos, like the defensive clause in the Athenian alliance, was not to be taken seriously. The war was born, as in recent days other wars have been born, of commercial jealousy and political suspicion. The Corinthians were jealous of Corcyra and her allies were suspicious of the growing power of Athens.

Those Athenians who had placed their trust in the defensive nature of the alliance were destined to receive a rude shock at the very commencement of affairs. Off the islet of Sybota the reorganized Corinthian fleet of 150 ships encountered the 110 vessels of the Corcyrean navy. Attached to the latter were ten Athenian vessels under strict instructions not to fight unless Corcyra or its possessions should be attacked. On this occasion the Corinthians were more than a match for their enemies and affairs went so desperately for the latter that the Athenians were in no doubt as to the danger that menaced Corcyra. At any rate, they interfered and twenty new Athenian ships appearing at an opportune moment, the Corinthians had to beat a retreat. There was now no question, if there ever had been any, as to the position of Athens. Both sides commenced to hunt for friends, and the ramifications of the contest covered Greece. The city of Potidæa which guarded the Isthmus of Pallene was tributary to Athens but received Corinthian magistrates. Athens declared that part of its defensive wall should be pulled down and that the Corinthian magistrates should be sent home. The Potidæans refused and automatically came into the war. Sparta, making the sad

case of the Potidæans a pretext, also joined Corinth, but this decision was not immediate and that Sparta eventually entered the contest was largely due to the pressure exerted by Corinth. Even the Macedonian king, Perdiccas, was tempted to play a hand in the game and at his instigation the Chalcidice rose up. On their part, the Athenians under Pericles were not idle. They knew better than most men how to unite political with military measures and while their troops were fighting in the North their government, by a stroke of the pen, excluded the Megarians from the markets and ports of their empire. It is true that the Megarians had already given Corinth some assistance, but this blow was unexpected. It threatened them, indeed, with economic ruin. Sympathisers with Corinth had been invited to look to their banking accounts.

However great wars may originate, they tend in the long run to develop into a contest between the outstanding powers on either side, the less important states being bribed or exploited as best suits the policy of the greater protagonists; and the contest which now arose soon took the appearance of a war between Sparta and Athens. The part played by Corinth was important, but Athens was never in any doubt that her great rival was Sparta.

The Peloponnesian War, as this contest has been termed, owes much of its later-day importance to Thucydides, who was essentially an historian, just as Herodotus was temperamentally a poet. The one desires facts, the other a picturesque story. But, apart from the genius of the man who places this drama so accurately before us, this contest has never failed in its appeal to mankind, precisely because mankind has never outgrown the motives which play at the back of it. The calculating ambitions of the great, the jealousy of rivals, the appeal of the demagogue to popular passion, the insensate hatred and childish fears of the mob, all are known to us.

For some years the history of Corinth is merged in that of Sparta and the Peloponnesian League until in 404 B.C., Athens definitely breaks and Sparta dictates terms. We are not here concerned with the final settlement except to note that Sparta, for reasons of her own, was not ungenerous, and that Corinth joined with Thebes to demand the total destruction of Athens, a demand which Sparta overruled.

Sparta, now in a paramount position, soon aroused the jealousy of her former allies, for she commenced to administer affairs within the entire Peloponnesus. Corinth already sore that her demands had been rejected when peace was concluded with Athens, allied herself with Argos, Thebes and Athens, and entered into what has been termed the Corinthian War. Sparta at this time was fully occupied by a war with Persia and the confederate cities had somewhat the best of the argument. In 394 B.C. the Confederates had gathered large forces at the Isthmus, and a Corinthian, encouraged by the disasters which had overtaken their dour enemy, urged the host to "burn out the wasps in their nest." Already, however, the Spartans were on the march and in the resulting battle of Corinth, the Spartans, although outnumbered, won the day.

Meanwhile, Agesilaus, King of Sparta, hurriedly recalled from Persia, was marching to Greece through Thrace and Macedonia. Gaining Greece, he pursued his way southward until in the district of Coronea he encountered the Confederate army. Once again Sparta gained the victory but, as was the case in the battle of Corinth, the vanquished were not destroyed, and the victors gained nothing material. Agesilaus crossed the Gulf of Corinth, near Itea, a course decided for him by the Confederates who effectively blocked the land route via the Isthmus, and for some years fighting was continuous about Corinth. It was the policy of the Confederates

to confine Sparta to the Peloponnesus and with that object were built the long walls between Corinth and Lechæum on the west and between Corinth and Cenchreæ on the east. The effect of these defences was entirely to isolate the Peloponnesians from Northern Greece, none passing to and fro without the consent of Corinth and its allies.

By this time feeling ran high and the prosecution of the war to a successful conclusion had become with many Corinthians a form of mania. No price appeared too great to pay for the destruction of the Power which but a few years earlier had saved Corinth from the dreaded Athenians. There were, of course, a few who asked whither the stream was taking them, there were even some who from the start had secretly held pro-Spartan views, but most of these were massacred in cold blood. Even the intensely localized patriotism that kept Greece a nation of warring cities was thrown overboard, for the city boundaries were pulled up and Argos and Corinth were declared indissoluble. But these fevers burn themselves out.

The Spartans had always been dangerous enemies and they countered the inconvenience of the Long Walls by breaking into them, driving back the Corinthians and capturing the town of Lechæum. When the winter set in, however, they retreated and the Corinthians repairing the breach, once again held the gate to the north. In the following year, however, the Spartans again appeared, this time under the command of Agesilaus. Once again they broke into the Long Walls and on this occasion captured both the town and the port of Lechæum. The presence of the Spartan in this quarter was the cause of a spectacle which could only have been witnessed in ancient Greece. In 390 B.C. the Isthmian games were being celebrated at Poseidon, the chief competitors being the Corinthians and the Argives. Almost with

the starting of the contest, however, Agesilaus and his Spartans appeared on the scene, and to the annoyance of the Corinthians, Agesilaus insisted upon presiding at the games. When the races were run and Agesilaus had gone home, the Corinthians proceeded to celebrate the entire affair once more, so that some athletes had the doubtful satisfaction of winning the same race twice.

For some time fighting and intrigue were everywhere the order of the day, Sparta winning desultory military successes which did not, however, pave the way to outright victory. Ultimately in 387 B.C. peace was reached by decree of Artaxerxes who had been asked to arbitrate between the warring cities. Sparta emerged from the trouble somewhat weaker in power and reputation, but it is not clear that Corinth gained very much. The union of Corinth and Argos by a clause in the peace was dissolved.

The day of Greece as a land of warring and independent cities is fast drawing to a close, when in 338 B.C. Corinth joins with Athens, Thebes and lesser powers against the encroaching might of Philip of Macedon. But the organized and calculating power of Philip was more than the Greek cities could withstand and Philip, made master of the situation by the victory of Chæronea, dictates an Hellenic Union and invites the Greek states to attend a Federal Congress at Corinth, an invitation which Sparta alone ignores. For Philip the congress is a step towards the realization of his design to found an Asiatic Empire, a project which receives more definite form a year later when he announces his intention to punish Persia for the disrespect she has shown to the Greek gods and to liberate the Greek cities in Asia. The Greek States have lost something of their independence, for they are now federated with the Macedonian Empire and they have been provided by Philip with a common ambition, but this alone does not produce real unity, the national spirit is forecasted, but has not yet arrived.

The death of Philip appeared momentarily to promise the Greeks a speedy return to the old order of things, and the occasion was marked by rejoicing, but Alexander the Great who shared his father's plans was quick to deal with the situation. Marching through Northern Greece almost before the Greeks had ceased their festivities, he arrived in Corinth where the Congress of the Confederacy appointed him general of the Greek forces. From this moment Corinth ceases to act as a city, and her history becomes merged in that of Greece. For the space of a hundred years, or nearly so, Corinth remained under Macedonian control until in 243 B.C. Aratus expelled the Macedonian garrison and made Corinth a member of the Achæan League. Twenty years later, however, the League, being at war with Sparta and the Aetolians, Cleomenes, king of Sparta, captured Corinth and laid siege to the Acropolis which was only saved by the arrival of Macedonian forces. For their assistance upon this occasion the Macedonians retained possession of the Acrocorinthus. Thus it happened that when the Romans defeated Philip V and compelled him to acknowledge the independence of Greece, they took over the Corinthian citadel. The independence of Greece was in fact, little more than a change of over-lord and the Romans now established themselves where Macedonia had ruled. The Achæan League did not acquiesce without a struggle, but the battle of Leucopetra, fought near Corinth in 146 B.C., marked the end of the League and the definite victory of Rome. Corinth was given up to plunder and destruction, the male inhabitants were killed, and the women and children were sold as slaves. Of the glory of Corinth, nothing was left. Such statues and paintings as were not destroyed were carried off, and a few empty and damaged buildings alone remained to mark the site of the city. Thus matters remained for a century.

The history of Corinth, of the site but not of the

ancient city, acquires renewed interest with the appearance of Julius Cæsar, who from the military point of view at once grasped its importance. He refortified Acrocorinthus, built a new city and restored the ancient ports. This done, he settled there a population of retired legionaries, and Roman merchants. But the new Corinth which had so strangely arisen upon the debris of the Greek city was, from the start, essentially Roman. The Roman Emperors fostered it and the power of Rome protected it. Roman merchants traded there, and there retired Romans amassed new art collections. Life was lived in the Roman fashion and gladiators fought in the arena.

While Rome retained her power all went well with Roman Corinth, but in A.D. 267 the Goths appeared and it became apparent that another chapter in the history of this spot was nearing its close. The end came in A.D. 395, when the city was captured and plundered by Alaric.

And here we may leave the history of Corinth, permitting ourselves only to notice that in 1858 a violent earthquake destroyed the small town which was still to be found upon the site. Well may the philosopher ask himself how many wars and rebellions, how much blood and how many tears have been required to make this spot what we now find it.

CHAPTER VI

MODERN CORINTH

“ Where is now thy far-seen beauty, O Dorian Corinth ? Where thy crown of towers, where thy ancient possessions ? Where are the temples of the Blessed and where the homes ? Where are the dames descended from Sisyphus, and where the tens of thousands, thy people of old ? Nay, but not even a trace of thee has remained, O thou of many evil dooms, but all hath been seized on and devoured by war.”—ANTIPATROS.

IT is now generally accepted that the seven great pillars at Corinth formed part of the colonnade of the Temple of Apollo, referred to by Pausanias as lying on the right of the road leading from the market-place to Sikyon. “ As you go out from the market-place to Sikyon, you first pass on your right the Temple of Apollo.”

Next to the Heraeon at Olympia this is the oldest Doric temple in Greece and although it marked a great advance upon anything previously attempted, it is not the perfected product of Grecian architecture. Six columns stood at either end of the temple and fifteen on either side. The interior consisted of two oblong chambers back to back ; they were, so far as we know, without means of communication one with the other. It may have been the case that the temple served for the worship of Artemis as well as Apollo, but this is doubtful.

It is interesting in this connection that the American Archæological School has discovered in the Western chamber the remains of foundations of a heavy basis in a position appropriate for a cult statue, and it is stated

with authority that, if there was in fact such a statue here, the temple must have been a double one. There is, however, no other indication that any other god but Apollo was worshipped here. We may note in passing, however, that the American excavators have definitely ascertained that this spot was a human habitation for at least two or three thousand years before the temple was built and it is suggested that the primitive cult established on this hill may have been handed down from generation to generation and finally united with the worship of Apollo. The history of Greece supplies us with numerous instances of the appropriation of ancient religious sites and customs, by the gods of invading hosts. In short, no man can say for how many thousands of years the site of these columns was a site consecrated to worship in one form or another.

Except in so far as they suggest the past, the seven Doric columns at Corinth did not strike me as impressive, and this can scarcely be ascribed to the absence of the rest of the building, since in Athens I constantly visited those great columns which alone mark the site of the Temple of Zeus. Mr. Ernest Short in his extremely informative history of religious architecture and symbolism, enters a defence of the Doric column which is certainly interesting.

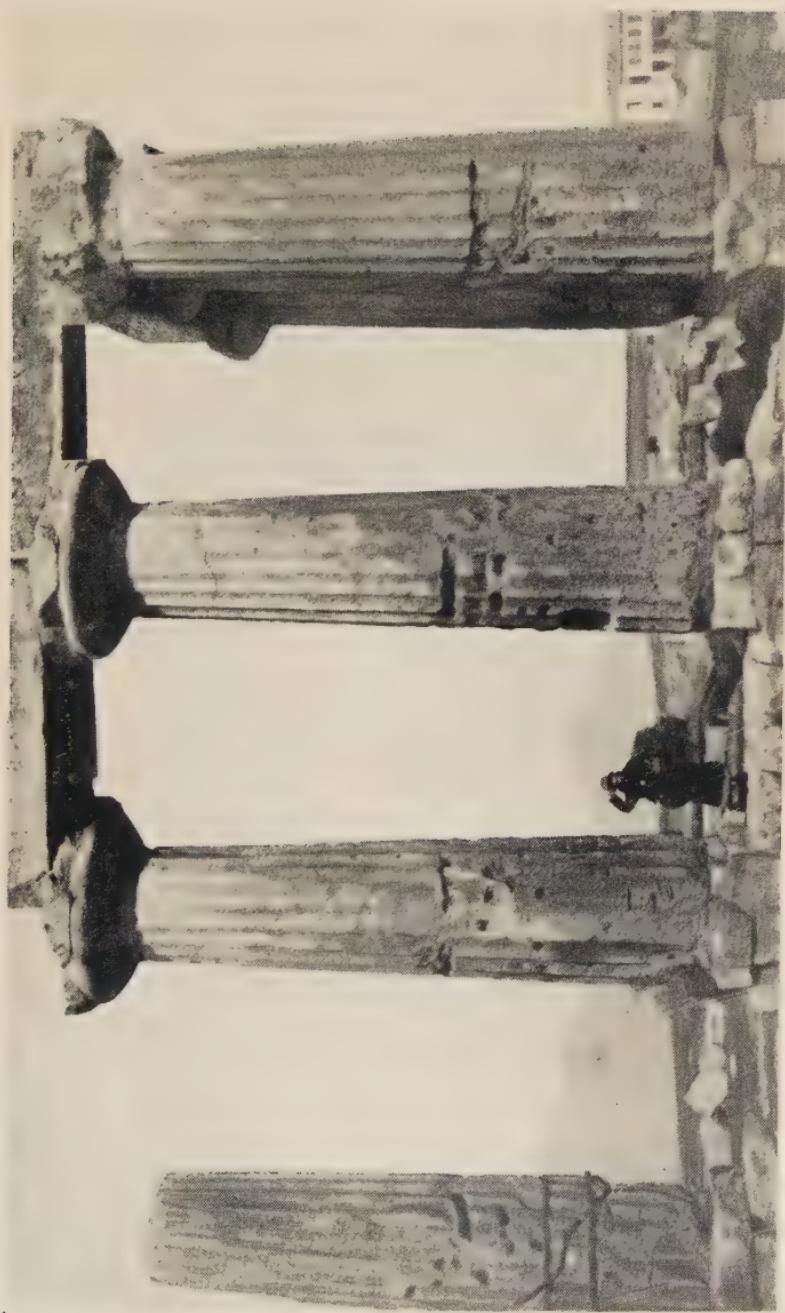
"The human figure is between five and six feet; this is the standard by which men should judge the work of men, and this gave *scale* to a Greek Temple. Vast size and variety are certainly impressive, but when the human scale is disregarded the spirit of man tends to be depressed rather than satisfied. The Hellene never forgot that he was building for his fellows and not for supermen or Cyclops."

Mr. Short is quite possibly correct, but expressing a purely personal view, I found the Doric columns at Corinth almost squat. At any rate there was an absence of ease and grace, which to my mind is disappointing.

The columns at Corinth are of rough limestone which was originally covered with very fine stucco giving an entirely smooth surface. After the temple had been standing for some time, however, probably in the days of the Roman occupation, a thick stucco with a certain amount of pounded marble was laid on over the old and to-day both the original and later stuccos may be noticed. The height of these columns is $23\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and they taper from a diameter at the base of 5 feet 8 inches, to 4 feet 3 inches at the top.

While we cannot speak positively as to the date upon which the temple was built, we know that it must have been somewhere about 600 B.C. when Periander was at the height of his power. Herodotus tells us that he made his doubtful adherents deposit pledges in the temple of Apollo. Similarly we cannot tell to what extent the temple suffered when Mummius destroyed Corinth in 146 B.C. But we know that as recently as the sixteenth century there were standing several columns that have since fallen and that the temple would not have remained intact even had there been no deliberate attempt to destroy it. Under the Turkish regime, the structure suffered greatly. As the columns fell from time to time, those portions of the floor which were liberated were carried off. For many years indeed this and similar structures elsewhere in Greece were regarded merely as convenient quarries from which stones of every shape and size might be extracted. The only portion of the flooring now remaining is to be found at the west end. On the entire eastern half of the temple the archæologists found hardly a block *in situ*. The foundations of four columns removed by the Turkish owner of the site about 130 years ago are still in position. Four other columns lie as they fell.

Passing the Museum and proceeding in the direction of Acrocorinthus, the visitor rapidly reaches a broad street



COLUMNS OF THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO, CORINTH

with raised pavement, paved with slabs of hard limestone. This is the Straight Road which led to the port of Lechæum. The smooth gutter to be seen at the inner edge of the pavement drained away the rain which dropped from the eaves of the colonnades that once lined the street. The Straight Road, oddly enough, was not continuous but in places was interrupted by steps and thus was useless for vehicular traffic, a circumstance that speaks eloquently of the cheap rate at which human beings were once purchasable.

Beyond the upper platform at the head of the street, stood the gateway into The Agora, a structure consisting originally of five arches of soft travertine from Corinthian quarries, but replaced in the Roman occupation by a triumphal arch in marble. When Pausanias saw the arch in the second century A.D. it was surmounted by two gilded bronze quadrigæ: of Helios, the Sun, and Phæthon. The view up the Straight Road at the time of Pausanias must have been magnificent in the extreme. Not quickly would the visitor forget this thoroughfare which passed between marble porticoes to the great arch surmounted by its golden chariots.

The more western of the colonnades that flanked the Straight Road served as portico to a row of small shops. The massive wall at the rear of the shops supported the ground upon which was erected a Basilica, dating from about the first century B.C. It is interesting to note, however, that beneath the foundation of the Basilica, the ruins of a Greek Market have been discovered. This might date from perhaps the fifth century B.C. It is indeed one of the difficulties at Corinth—it was, at any rate, a difficulty which I personally experienced—to visualize the city at any particular period, to such an extent does the Roman overlap the Greek.

The fountain of Peirene, which lies to the left of the Propylæa at the head of the Straight Road, I found

intensely interesting, probably because the better condition of the remains leaves less to the imagination. The excellent and thorough work executed by the American School at Corinth immediately impresses the visitor. In 1898 the façade of the spring was uncovered, and it is now possible to trace the different stages of its building. Before the destruction of the city by Mummius in 146 B.C., the ancient Greek fountain consisted of six simple grottoes, with cross-walls to support the roof. Water was supplied by channels cut back into the moist clay to incredible distances. The walls supporting the rock were delicately carved on their front ends ; upon the rear cross walls, over which the water flowed, filling the cisterns, was mounted a delicate Ionic column. The surfaces of the walls were frescoed. The rugged rock stratum above, however, stood untouched.

Fortunately the literary activities of the American archæologists have kept pace with their work in the field, and I cannot do better than quote from the report upon Peirene, of Dr. R. B. Richardson, who directed the excavations when they began in 1896.

“ To the east of the paved road and close up against the Agora itself, only at a much lower level, was found, buried under 35 feet of earth, the famous fountain Peirene, tallying exactly with the description of Pausanias as ‘ a series of chambers, that are like caves, bearing a façade of white marble.’ Originally there was a two-story façade of Roman fashion, but before the time of Pausanias it had received a covering of marble, which has now fallen off, but has left traces of itself in the holes drilled in the limestone, in the rough hacking away of the half columns, and in the numerous marble fragments which lay in front of the façade. This was not the earliest form. It was built up in front of a more simple Greek fountain structure, which consisted of seven cross-walls placed under the edge of the stratum forming the upper terrace. Six chambers were thus formed, which showed the chaste beauty of Greek workmanship, while the stratum of native rock, which covered them, gave a touch of nature and made them caves. The walls ended at the front in the form of an *anta* delicately carved. On a parapet at the rear of each chamber, a single slender Ionic column between two *anta* sup-

ported an Ionic entablature. The stuccoed walls were striped horizontally and vertically with red on a blue field, on which appear fishes swimming. The chambers were really reservoirs, filled by the water which flowed along their backs."

Such was the fountain, possibly the work of Periander, before the destruction of the city by Mummius in 146 B.C. When Julius Cæsar restored the city in 43 B.C., the famous Peirene was restored with it, Roman fashion, with a two-story façade of limestone, with half columns to each story. Most of these half columns are now lost, but one half-column, badly hacked, remains, of the Roman Doric order. This façade was quite possibly one of the first structures of the new city.

"We know nothing further about the Greek system," Dr. Richardson continues, "but in the Roman readjustment, the water was led from the series of cisterns into a large rectangular basin, which formed the centre of a quadrangle 50 feet square. In the north-east corner is a hole through which it was drained, and at the north end a flight of five steps led down into it."

The well is filled to-day from the same spring. In ancient days women probably came down the short flight of steps at the end and filled their pitchers at the spouts where the discharge holes are still to be seen in the broken marble slab. The water, so crystal-clear that the visitor could walk into it from the steps before he realized he had reached it, appears to have been used for more than one purpose. "The water is sweet to drink," says Pausanias, "and they say that the so-called Corinthian bronze gets its colour from being plunged red-hot into the water."

Peirene is, in some respects, the most interesting monument of ancient Corinth—the famous fountain where Bellerophon, with the aid of Athena, caught the winged horse Pegasus. According to one tradition, it was the hoof of Pegasus that struck the first water from the

fountain. A second tradition has it that the spring was a gift to Sisyphus from the river Asopus, for having given information against Zeus in a matter concerning the interests of the river-god. The quadrangle, with its walls twenty feet high and its three apses, probably covered with half domes, must have provided a pleasant, shady resort, so in the *Medea* of Euripides (L. 68) some one says that the elders are to be found "near the august waters of Peirene playing draughts (*πεσσόι*)."¹ Nature and art had combined to make it so attractive that Corinth was proud to call herself, and to be called by others, "The City of Peirene." In later Roman times, some one added to the façade an entire coating of marble, and, as the excavators found on a statue base close to the façade an inscription dedicated by the Corinthians in honour of Regilla, wife of Herodes Atticus, it is generally assumed that this wealthy Roman counted this among his many benefactions to Greek cities. Still later, in Byzantine times (probably in the reign of Justinian), the fountain was again remodelled by the addition of a balcony built on to the front of the façade, made of columns from different buildings and of some colossal architrave blocks, roughly bevelled off at the ends and a palm-leaf carved on them.

Two inscriptions of Roman date (including the one dedicated to Regilla, the wife of Herodes Atticus) make the identity of Peirene practically certain.

"Well-watered" was one of the most frequent epithets applied to Corinth in ancient days, and certainly the city was well supplied in the matter of fountains. On the road leading from the market-place to Sikyon, on the opposite side from the temple of Apollo, the fountain of Glauce has been laid bare by the excavators. The façade seems to have shown four chambers, separated from one another by pilasters, the effect being, as in the case of Peirene, that of a series of grottoes. Here again,

the report of the American School¹ gives a thoroughly clear account of its appearance and history.

" Water was brought by a small conduit from a source at the base of the Acrocorinthus, the inflow being not very great, certainly much less than in the fountain of Peirene. The reservoirs and basins are lined throughout with very hard waterproof cement, brown in colour and containing very small pebbles, these being slightly coarser in the floor than on the walls. The fountain seems to have remained intact during the life of the Greek city. With the Roman restoration the fountain was again brought into use, the only apparent change in its plan being a curtailment of the long western reservoir. Across this a wall was built, leaving it only a little larger than the other reservoirs. The rock walls behind this wall were all quarried away at this time. Probably at this time what remained of the ledge at the west side of the fountain was also removed, leaving the west wall very thin as we see it now. Ultimately the fountain fell into decay and its supply of water was cut off. Most of the roof of the western reservoir and of the portico, together with the columns and part of the west wall, collapsed. In time a house with two stories and a basement, the second story being on the roof, was established in the fountain. The house built in a fountain, however, had no water until a well was laboriously sunk through the floor to a depth of fifteen metres. At last the house, too, was abandoned and the Fountain of Glauce, now merely three low caves side by side, came to be used as a sheepfold. As such, and known to the inhabitants of the modern village by an unsavoury name, *boudroumi*, 'the dungeon,' it became the object of the excavations which have now finally restored to it its ancient name."

This is the fountain mentioned by Pausanias as the spot where Glauce, daughter of Creon, King of Corinth, threw herself, in the burning wedding-robe, to cool her pain. Jason came to Corinth with Medea, by whose aid he had obtained the Golden Fleece. But, forgetful of his vows and knowing that marriage to the barbarian maiden was no marriage, he fell in love with Glouce, to whom the betrayed Medea sent the fatal wedding-gift of the poisoned robe, and Glouce in her agony threw

¹ "Art and Archæology," Vol. XIV, No. 4 (Oct. 1922), pp. 222-3.

herself into the fountain. Although, strictly speaking, according to the legends, the hapless Glauce and Medea and Jason lived centuries before the fountain was built, by Roman times the origin of the fountain was sufficiently wrapped in the mists of antiquity to make the name seem reasonable. Certainly the strange impressiveness of this rock-hewn house fits well into the setting of the whole lurid story of Jason and Medea.

In the market-place, west of the Propylæa and 25 feet below the surface, has been laid bare yet another fountain enclosed by a Doric frieze of triglyphs and metopes. There is no record in the ancient writings of this fountain, which appears to be of great antiquity. Its depth and the style of the lions' heads on the frieze lead those who are versed in things archæological, to date it back to the sixth or early fifth century B.C. This "Old Spring," as the archæologists called it for convenience, is interesting as the only case on the site of Corinth of an ancient Greek fountain of such an early date, unaltered and untouched by Roman hands. Nor was this complete preservation accidental. The fountain was evidently invested by the Greeks with a sacred character and great pains were taken to guard it from profane hands, even after it had ceased to be useful. The spring seems to have run dry somewhere about the end of the fourth century B.C., and

"though now no longer of use, it was not dismantled, but was carefully closed with stone slabs and covered, together with the area to the east, with earth. For this very reason the fountain is still preserved in our own day with its bronze lion's head spouts intact, for the Romans never saw it or suspected its existence."¹

The Agora, which is reached through the Propylæa at the end of the Straight Road, stretched 150 metres to the west, i.e. on the visitor's right, and 65 metres to

¹ "Art and Archæology," *loc. cit.* 216.

the east, and had an average breadth from north to south of about 95 metres. In the great days of Corinthian prosperity this entire area was paved with marble. The greater part of the Agora is still to be uncovered, the portion disclosed being principally the northern section to the west of the Propylæa. Here was the centre of the commercial and political life of the ancient city, and the locating of the Agora was the first object of the excavators, because in the words of Dr. Richardson, "Pausanias, blest of all excavators, had described the position of the principal buildings along the four principal avenues radiating from the public square. But so long as we could not find the square, we had no starting point." Dr. Richardson vividly and enthusiastically describes, "the most ecstatic moment of my life," when a portion of the road entering the Agora from Sikyon on the west was laid bare. The Straight Road coming up from the harbour of Lechæum on the north had already been tapped. "Where these two streets intersected each other, there surely was the Agora. . . . We had hit the bulls-eye and settled the whole topography of Corinth."¹

The uninstructed visitor will be interested in what are known as the "North-West Shops." These are a row of fifteen chambers on the northern side of the Agora, beneath the shadow of the remaining columns of the Temple. To-day only the ground floor of these shops remains, but the walls are of such heavy construction that it is probable that they once supported a second story. These structures are not particularly impressive as they stand. The visitor, however, who can picture them fronted, as they were, by a colonnade and backed by the towering columns of the great temple of Apollo, will gain some idea of the appearance of the site in days long past. If he were standing before the shops, but a

¹ R. B. Richardson, "Greece through the Stereoscope."

little distance away from them, he would have before and around him the marble pavement of the Agora. Ahead of him would be seen the columns and covered way before the shops and, towering above the latter, the long side of the Temple with its fifteen Doric columns supporting the roof. To the right front could be seen the magnificent Propylæa leading to the Straight Road.

Behind the North West Shops lies a long stoa of Greek construction which must have been disused from the time the Romans built the shops. The Romans, in short, here extended the site. What had originally been the northern limit of the Agora, was built out and made to front upon the new area.

At the east end of the Agora have been uncovered the foundations of a Roman Basilica, a large rectangular building of the Roman imperial period, solidly and magnificently built and richly decorated, and evidently of great importance. This discovery was specially noteworthy for the remarkable series of Roman imperial portrait sculptures that came to light in the course of the excavations. There were eight major pieces, four of which have their features sufficiently well preserved to admit of their probable identification as the Emperors Augustus, Tiberius, Gaius Cæsar, and Lucius Cæsar. The head of Tiberius is almost perfectly preserved, and is unflattering enough to satisfy even that bitter-tongued historian, Tacitus.

But the most important and complete sculptures of the Roman period are those of the Captives' Façade, a two-story façade of Parian marble in the Corinthian order, decorating a high wall west of the Propylæa. The façade gets its present name from the colossal figures of barbarian captives which, in the second story, took the place of the columns. Two bases are preserved, and parts of four colossal figures, two women and two men. The strange "barbarian" costume of the latter, with the

full, long-sleeved tunic, the flowing cloak and soft, pointed cap, and the long, effeminate ringlets falling over the shoulders, must have formed a striking contrast to the appearance of the Roman warriors in the triumphal procession of a conquering Roman general.

Next to the Temple of Apollo and the Fountain of Glause, the most interesting remains discovered outside the Agora are the Odeum and the Theatre. Of the former, which lies a little to the west of the Fountain of Glause, enough has been excavated to show its size (about 75 metres in outside diameter) and to disclose one of the entrances and stairways, part of the auditorium, and a small portion of the stage.

As in most ancient theatres, the seats are where possible cut out of the native rock, elsewhere they rest upon a bed of concrete. Unfortunately the visitor cannot get a good view of the building until the Odeum has been completely cleared, when it should be an impressive ruin of Roman times. The theatre is just north of the Odeum, at a lower level. The little that has been as yet laid bare—here a part of the orchestra and the stage—already shows traces of one Greek and two Roman periods and various Byzantine foundations. The enlarging and beautifying of this theatre seems to have been enthusiastically carried on for some time, for there have been found here fragments of sculpture that are among the best the Corinthian excavations have yielded, as well as some interesting terracottas, and a mould for making small copies of the bust of Athena Parthenos.

Among the minor objects of interest unearthed during the excavations is an inscription cut on a large block of stone, which identifies it as the lintel of the Synagogue of the Hebrews—an interesting piece of independent evidence of the existence at Corinth of that body of Hebrews from which probably arose the Christian congregation addressed by St. Paul in his epistles. Large numbers of sculptures,

of both the Greek city and the Roman, are collected in the Museum erected by the Greek Government, to the north-west of Old Corinth. They include a head of a youth, found in the orchestra of the theatre, resembling Myron's heads in shape and in the hair, and an extremely impressive female figure of colossal size and grand style, probably a very fine copy of a fifth-century statue of a goddess. Other interesting works of sculpture are a large fragment, in relief, of an early date, representing two dancing mænads, half life-size, and a marble head of a girl, of excellent workmanship, which, from its style, may be a fourth-century original or a very good Roman copy.

The Acrocorinthus has also been partially investigated in connection with the excavations, and explorations in the neighbourhood have disclosed many traces of pre-Hellenic inhabitants.

Pausanias mentions a bewildering number of temples along the road leading up to Acrocorinth, to Isis and Serapis, to Helois, to the Mother of the Gods, to the Fates, to Demeter and Persephone—but no trace of these temples remains. At the highest point of the road, according to Pausanias, there stood the famous temple of Aphrodite, but the remains excavated at this point seem to be those of a late tower, and the few foundations below it do not resemble those of a temple.

It is interesting to note that one of the paramount benefits that the village of Old Corinth has received, as much through the influence of the excavators as through the help of the American Red Cross (which had undertaken to relieve the village of a source of malaria), is an improved and purified water-supply—a pathetic piece of irony in view of all the evidence they have uncovered of the “well-watered,” many-fountained city of ancient days.

CHAPTER VII

NAUPLIA AND EPIDAUROS

“This beauty which Greece owes to nature, makes by the perfect harmony of the landscape with the works of men, the fascination of her ruins.”—**GUSTAVE FOUGÈRES.**

THE port of Nauplia is well worthy of a visit both for its setting, which is exceptionally beautiful, and as a centre from which to make small expeditions.

My first impression as I gazed across the water towards the Arcadian mountains was that by some enchantment I had been carried to one of the smaller of the Italian lakes, a sensation that was heightened by the ancient castle which rises out of the water a short distance from the shore. Above the harbour towers the castle of Itsh-Kaleh which was the ancient Acropolis of Nauplia. The town itself is, for some reason, clean and well kept, a fact which in Greece is sufficiently exceptional to deserve notice. Another factor of importance to the traveller is a small but well managed hotel in which I passed several days with keen enjoyment. Nauplia possesses its own museum, but the exhibits are not of any particular interest to the traveller familiar with the museum at Athens. Nauplia, in short, does not need the assistance of days gone by, but is well able to appeal to the visitor upon its own merits. Could the town, in its present setting, by some magic be transported to England, it would prove a veritable gold mine to our impecunious railways; even in France or Italy it

would stand out as a spot of surpassing beauty and I cannot believe that its claims will for long remain unrecognized, even where it is.

The most satisfactory method of reaching Epidauros from Nauplia, is by car, the journey being very pleasant and not too long. Epidauros, the ancient seat of healing, and by local legend the birthplace of the god Asclepios, is more beautifully situated than many spots of equal or similar renown. The Asclepieion was distant about six miles from the city, in an open valley well sheltered by surrounding mountains of from two to three thousand feet in height. It is believed to have been instituted in the sixth century B.C. and it sufficed to make Epidauros so famous that, as Strabo tells us, the spot was constantly crowded.¹ Unfortunately but little remains of the Temple which had been erected upon the site of an earlier sanctuary. It appears to have been a Doric structure of porous stone, coloured in red and blue, with six columns at either end, and nine at each side. It faced the east, was seventy-nine feet long and forty-two feet wide. At the main entrance was an elaborate ivory door, above which was inscribed—"Within the incense-filled sanctuary one must be pure; and purity is to have religious thoughts."² Within might have been seen the celebrated statue of Asclepios, done in ivory and gold, by Thrasymedes of Paros.

South-west of the Temple stood the Tholos, the celebrated rotunda known as the "Place of Sacrifice." This famous structure is believed to have been erected towards the close of the fifth century B.C.; the fourteen Corinthian columns of the inner colonnade are said to have been the most beautiful ever conceived, the entire building, in fact, was, it is claimed, the most beautiful circular structure erected by the Greeks. Beyond the fact that the building was used for certain ceremonial

¹ Strabo VIII, VI, 15. ² Farnell, "The Evolution of Religion."



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sacrifices, but little is known of the significance that attached to it.

Grouped about the two principal structures were lesser temples dedicated to Artemis, Aphrodite and other gods and goddesses. As we have said, however, the remains of all these buildings are to-day principally of interest to the archæologist.

Very different is the case of the theatre, cut into a side of a hill, a short distance to the south-west, which is in such an excellent state of preservation, that plays might to-day be performed and witnessed here without trouble. This theatre, which is reputed to have been the largest of the ancient theatres in Greece, with the exception of that at Megalopolis, accommodated about 9,000 persons. It was of delightful proportions, of great beauty, and richly sculptured. The acoustic properties of the theatre are really wonderful when we remember that the highest row of seats is 193 feet from the orchestra and 74 feet above it, and further that it is unroofed. Standing upon the top tier of seats I was able, without an effort, to hear every word spoken in ordinary tones by my dragoman down in the orchestra.

To appreciate the full significance of Epidauros, it is necessary to bear in mind that Asclepios was recognized in ancient Greece as one of the greater divinities, sometimes as the Son of Zeus and occasionally even as Zeus himself. His fame had spread throughout Greece and although Epidauros was not the only spot consecrated to his worship, it was almost certainly the most famous. Both at Athens and Kos, festivals were held in honour of the god of healing, but these festivals were not the most important events in the religious year at either of these cities. It was left to Epidauros to bind its fame to that of the god. Thus the festival at Epidauros, held annually in September, was almost certainly the greatest event of the kind in Greece.

It would be interesting to know how much medical knowledge the priests of Asclepios actually possessed and to what extent Epidauros justified its reputation. There appears to have been a School of Medicine for the training of the temple priests at Kos, but there is nothing to suggest that such a school existed at Epidauros prior to the Roman occupation. On the other hand, it is probable that the priests acquired a certain proficiency in some directions both from their own observations and verbally from their predecessors. It would be a great mistake, we think, to write down these men as mere charlatans. It is almost certain that amongst their number there must have been some who, beneath the cloak of an absurd superstition, strove to master the first principles of what is, after all, an exact science. At any rate, they appear to have appreciated one principle which the gradual increase in medical knowledge has temporarily pushed into the background, the fact that the mind alone can retard or assist, or even in exceptional cases actually effect, a cure. All the machinery of Lourdes—I use the word in its best sense—was present at Epidauros, the intense religious enthusiasm, the records of miraculous cures, the music, the mystery, the faith in an all-compassionate god. And can we doubt that these factors, so potent in our own day in certain nervous cases, were equally effective then? Considerable attention has been directed at different times to the nature of the miraculous cures recorded on the tablets at Epidauros. But these records were intended, we think, to serve a far higher purpose than many critics attribute to them. As Professor Jayne remarks, they

"were freely used to impress the suppliants with the belief that the supernatural powers of the divinity were still available for them. . . . They were diligently used as exhibits to render the mind . . . more pliable for mental suggestion."

Apart, however, from the possibility that they were used to produce in the patient a state of mind favourable to a cure, these records are intensely interesting as showing the comparatively low degree of intellect possessed by the lower orders of ancient times. For we must admit the probability that the priests would not have tolerated inscriptions which occasioned incredulity and sarcastic comment. We do not mean by this, that every visitor had to accept every inscription as literally true, but rather that records which were universally regarded as absurd, would have been a positive menace to the efficacy of any spot which, like Epidauros, largely depended upon faith for its results. It is, in fact, a fair inference that the inscriptions brought to light by the efforts of the Greek Archæological Society, were accepted as true by the rank and file of those who invoked the aid of Asclepios upon their own behalf.

Professor Percy Gardner, who has devoted considerable attention to these inscriptions, remarks that the character of the writing points to the fourth or early part of the third century, although "We are by no means justified in supposing that all or most of the cures recorded in our tablets were of the same period as the tablets themselves." Amongst these so-called cures are several cases of men to whom sight was restored. The temple-dogs were sacred at Epidauros, and in one case we are told of a blind boy who was licked by one of the temple-dogs on the eyes, and who departed cured. But this case would appear to be more possible than that of a man who, we are told, had only one eye, no vestige of the second eye remaining in its empty socket. To this man there came a vision in which the god mixed a salve and poured it upon the eyelid; with the result that sight was restored to the second eye.

The following inscription, which I quote verbally, is more than usually interesting.

"Case of the dumb boy ; he came to the precinct to ask a cure of his dumbness ; when he had made the preliminary sacrifice and performed the rites, the slave of the god who carried the torch, turning to the father of the boy, said, 'Do you promise that if within a year he gains the end for which he came he will make the sacrifice of thanksgiving ?' And the boy suddenly answered, 'I promise' ; the father, in astonishment bade him say it again, and he said it again and thenceforth was cured."

Not every cure recorded in the ancient inscriptions would appear to have merited the intervention of the god. Take for instance, the case of the bald gentleman who felt unable to maintain a self-confident attitude amongst his shock-headed friends. Are we really to believe, as the inscription tells us, that the god anointed the bald head of this petitioner in his sleep and made the hair to grow again ? But an even more amazing case is that of a lady who was with child for five years. Thanks to the intervention of the god, the child was born in the Temple. But as though this birth after five years were not in itself sufficiently marvellous, the writer of the inscription felt constrained to tell us that the child, immediately after birth, strolled out and washed himself at the spring.

There are other cases, which appear to indicate a not altogether disinterested piety. We are told, for instance, that a porter *en route* to the Temple fell down and in so doing broke into many pieces a cup which his master was in the custom of using. Gathering the pieces into his bag, however, he proceeded upon his way and on opening the bag within the Temple, he took out the cup which had become whole. The master having heard the servant's story, dedicated the cup to the god. It is, of course, a possible explanation that the slave, having fallen and broken the cup, in some fashion glued together the fragments, but finding that he was unable to obliterate the traces of the fracture, successfully

diverted attention from his own carelessness by a tribute to the generous conduct of the god.

But did people really believe these stories? We think we should be doing the Greeks a great injustice if we replied by an unqualified affirmative. Doubtless, the mob accepted these and other wonders without question, and the mere fact of their faith must in many cases have assisted their own cure. But the intelligent men of ancient Greece were not very different from intelligent men of to-day, and most probably they affected to believe many things which it was neither politic nor useful to dispute.

The worship of Asclepios had as its principal seats Athens, Epidauros and Pergamon, and while there is little to-day at Epidauros which will instruct the uninstructed, the site should, as we have said, be visited both for what it once was and not less for its picturesque beauty.

CHAPTER VIII

OLYMPIA

“Nought else there is
But that weird beat of Time
Which doth disjoin
To-day from Hellas.”—LEWIS MORRIS.

OLYMPIA stands upon a high plain surrounded by mountains and, with other sites of interest and beauty within the Peloponnesus, should certainly be visited. The Arcadians, who in classical times occupied the surrounding territory, regarded themselves as the original inhabitants of the land, driven thither by formidable invaders. But however that may be, Olympia was one of the sanctuaries of classical Greece.

To the visitor familiar with Delphi a comparison suggests itself, but it is a comparison all in favour of Olympia; for where Delphi is grand Olympia is beautiful. The religious associations of the two spots in the earliest times, however, are similarly shrouded in mystery. The tradition is that Heracles, the reigning deity at Olympia in its greatest days, arrived with the Dorians.

In the middle of the seventh century B.C. the fame and influence of Olympia was such that it afforded a title to power within the Peloponnesus. This fact was so well recognized that more than one attempt was made by contending parties to seize and hold the sanctuary, a state of things which only ceased with the ascendancy of Sparta, who definitely undertook its defence.

The Olympic Games with which the spot is most generally associated, were, in legend, instituted in honour of Pelops and were later reformed by Heracles. Originally of purely local interest, these games soon became one of the few institutions invested by the ancient Greeks with an almost national interest. All the Greek cities were invited to compete, and all Greece was interested in the result of the contests. The national interest was increased by the fact that only Greeks might participate. No foreigner, however great his reputation, might enter the lists. In order that champions and their friends and other visitors might reach the games in safety, it was customary for contending cities and states to proclaim a sacred truce a week or so before the games were due to commence and which held good for a similar period after the games had terminated.

It is the popular view that the Olympic games were solely athletic in character. But this is a misconception. Artists and musicians, and even orators, displayed their talent and doubtless excited the interest and admiration of the "intellectuals" of the day. None the less, interest unquestionably was most keenly aroused in the purely athletic side of the contest.

The Greeks, we must remember, held that physical perfection was pleasing to the gods, and for this reason amongst others such contests as those of Olympia possessed a religious significance which appealed to all the Greeks alike. Apollo was honoured by the games at Delphi; Posidon by the Isthmian Games at Corinth; and Olympian Zeus, the greatest of the gods, by the greatest of the games, those at Olympia.

The athletic contests tended to become more exacting and more comprehensive as time went on. To the original foot races were added wrestling, boxing, jumping, chariot races and horse races. To be victorious at Olympia was literally to win immortal fame. From 776 B.C. onwards,

the names and cities of the victors were inscribed on official lists which were preserved with the utmost care and which, indeed, in some cases, may be seen and read to-day.

The Olympic Festival was held every fourth year, and the intervening period of 48 months, known as the "Olympiad" became the standard by which time was calculated throughout Greece.

It can probably be said without exaggeration that this festival was more essentially national in character than any other Greek institution. Competitors and onlookers came from the most remote cities of the country as well as from small Greek communities overseas. But not all the visitors were competitors or onlookers, amongst the throng might have been found those who were fulfilling a vow, those who came to sell their wares or their talents, and even those who, menaced by disaster or inspired by hopes, sought relief or confirmation in the voice of the oracle. Women alone were not permitted to view the contests.¹

Bury finds in the position of Olympia one of the causes which contributed to make the Festival so popular with the Greeks overseas :

"The scene of the great games was all the nearer to the Greeks beyond the western sea ; and none of the peoples of the mother-country vied more eagerly or more often in the contests of Olympia than the children who had found new homes far away on Sicilian and Italian soil."

It is significant that of the twelve treasuries of which the remains can still be traced, no less than five were dedicated by Italian and Sicilian cities. It is easy to understand that as the years went by and the Festival became more and more patronized by the Greeks from distant parts, Olympia ceased to be merely a scene of

¹ Pausanias states that virgins might witness the festival, but this is probably an error.

athletic contest and became a great centre for the exchange of information, the renewal of friendships and the increase of commerce.

It is improbable that Olympia was ever a city of even moderate size. Its importance depended almost entirely upon the Festival and during the years that intervened between one Festival and another, it would be visited only by a few pilgrims and an occasional emissary from one of the warring cities. Visitors attracted by the Olympian games brought their own accommodation. They would pitch tents for themselves, or quite probably would sleep in the open air without covering. The merchants would set up their booths and at the close of the contest take them away again.

The judges in charge of the games were appointed by the people of Elis to the number of eight or twelve. They were responsible for seeing that no one but a Greek by birth should compete, and further, that the candidates had undergone a satisfactory course of training. The latter provision was no doubt necessary both on account of the exacting nature of the contests and from the desire of the Eleans to maintain the contests at a high pitch of excellence. Those contestants who failed for any reason to appear when their names were called were heavily fined and dubbed cowards.

Victors in the contests received only a wreath of laurel, a palm branch and the right to erect a statue in the Altis. The real prize, however, came later in the extreme honour in which the victor was held in his own city and in the frequently valuable gifts which he received on returning there. At Athens, a victor, by the law of Solon, received a sum of 500 drachmae and food for the rest of his life ; at Sparta, and this is very typical, he received the right to fight in battle next to the king.

Although Olympian games are justly celebrated, it is doubtful whether they contributed in any way to the

physical standard attained by the Greeks generally. There is no doubt that in the early days when any Greek who was more or less proficient in some branch of athletics might compete with a fair hope of success, the influence of the games was beneficial. But in the later days of the contest, the standard of ability was so high that to all intents and purposes, the contestants constituted a class by themselves, as do nowadays professional footballers, and were drawn from amongst the comparatively few who were specially trained and fed for the purpose. It is interesting that the Spartans, essentially the hardest and most formidable race in Greece, had little or no use for that artificial ability in one particular direction which distinguishes the super-athlete.

In their early days the Olympian games were completed within twenty-four hours but as the number of contestants increased and the nature of the games became more varied, the programme was extended until ultimately it occupied a full five days.

The sacred precinct known as the Altis was situated on a piece of level ground at the junction of the Cladeus and Alpheus. The Altis was surrounded by a wall with several entrances and it was amongst the temples and statues to be found within this space that the great crowd would pass its time when the contests were not actually being carried out. Entering the Altis by the southern gate and passing along the Sacred Road graced by monuments to past victors in the games, the visitor would reach the great temple of Zeus in which was to be seen the wonderful statue of the god executed by Phidias in gold and marble. This temple was said to have been built by the Eleans in the fifth century B.C. It was a Doric edifice with six columns at either end and thirteen on each side, erected upon an artificial mound. The great statue by Phidias was about 40 feet in height and stood upon a pedestal of which the remains may still be traced. What was the

OLYMPIA : THE PALESTRA



ultimate fate of the statue is not known. The metopes of the Temple of Zeus were by an unknown artist and represented the various labours of Heracles. It is said that the artist who designed these groups relied for his effects largely upon the use of colour. Indeed, amongst the discoveries is a head of Heracles upon which some trace of colour may still be seen. Another metope has a red background. But colour was distinctly in evidence at Olympia, the buildings themselves being tinted in blue and red. As Professor Percy Gardner points out, "We shall always greatly misjudge Greek architecture and sculpture if we think of them as cold and colourless."

In the centre of the Altis was the great altar of Zeus where the ashes of countless victims made a colossal pile upon the stone foundation. It is said that steps were cut in the solid mass of ashes in order that men might reach the top of the altar. Women were not permitted to walk on the ashes. Slightly north of the Temple of Zeus was the Pelopium where honour was rendered to Pelops, and still farther to the north, under the hill of Cronos, was the Temple of Hera. This was possibly one of the most ancient temples in the Altis, since the worship of Hera by the Eleans was at least as ancient as the worship of Zeus. It is said that the virgins of Elis held athletic contests of their own in honour of Hera. This temple was a Doric structure with six columns at either end and sixteen on each side, the chief entrance was on the south side. It is not without interest that those who have traced the development of Doric architecture from timber construction have found in this temple an important link in the chain.

The treasury houses lay between the northern extremity of the Altis and the hill of Cronos.

To the visitor to ancient Olympia, however, the most important structure after the Temple of Zeus was probably the Stadium which lay to the north-east of the Altis.

The actual length of the Stadium is 210 yards not counting the free space beyond the starting and finishing lines. A row of stone slabs let into the ground marked the starting point of the foot races. In these stones might be seen small grooves in which the competitor could place his toes to assist him to start. Professor E. A. Gardner remarks, "As these two grooves are only about six inches apart it seems clear that the Greek runner must have started with his feet close together, a position which must have been prescribed in order to secure a fair start."

All foot races took place in the Stadium, as also the leaping competitions and the hurling of discus and spear. Spectators of the races crowded the Cronos Hill.

The main gymnasium lay to the north-west of the Altis. It was here that the athletes spent the last months of their training under the eye of the judges who later would decide the victors in the contests.

I will not attempt a description of the remains which to-day mark the site of Olympia ; I would, however, urge the tourist to visit this spot for himself. Not much remains to us of the ancient structures, but even a superficial knowledge of the importance which once attached to this site will suffice to make the visit one of extraordinary interest. Many treasures are to be seen in the museum and, to combine the practical with the ideal, Olympia boasts one of the few satisfactory hotels outside of Athens. If the journey is made by railway from Corinth this trip does not involve the slightest discomfort and the scenery *en route* would repay the journey many times over, even if Olympia had nothing of its own to offer.

But Olympia is in many respects unique. It was, as it were, a heritage of all the Greeks and represented a privilege shared by all Greek cities and peoples alike.

CHAPTER IX

THE SPARTANS

“Only such persons interest us, . . . who have stood in the jaws of need, and have by their own wit and might extricated themselves, and made man victorious.”—EMERSON.

THE appeal of Sparta to the imagination is probably as great as that of Athens, although for very different reasons. For we admire the Athenians for what they did, the Spartans for what they were. This contrast between the work and the man is, we think, the subtle and almost unrecognized explanation of the fascination which the Peloponnesian War exerts over us. To understand Athens it is necessary to appreciate the ambitions of her Statesmen, the power of her Navy, the extent of her Empire, and even the grandeur of her buildings. To understand Sparta it is necessary merely to understand the Spartan.

At no time was Sparta itself a city of artistic consequence, although neither the arts nor letters were neglected. Thucydides, in a few well-known lines, makes the comparison with Athens :

“Suppose the city of Sparta to be deserted, and nothing left but the Temples and the ground plan, distant ages would be very unwilling to believe that the power of the Lacedæmonians was at all equal to their fame . . . whereas, if the same fate befel the Athenians, the ruins of Athens would strike the eye, and we should infer their power to be twice as great as it really is.”

For the comparative poverty of Sparta the situation of her territory was indirectly responsible. Her land was

entirely agricultural and she possessed no satisfactory sea-board, a fact which would, in any event, have limited her commerce, even had the Spartan had a taste for it. The Spartan, however, had no opportunity to indulge in commerce and in fact held it in contempt. It appears to have happened in the later days of Sparta, that individuals, as large landowners, or from some other cause, acquired wealth, but for very many years the system in force was such that all landowners received equal incomes from land. In short, as a people, the Spartans were a poor people.

As everybody is aware, the Spartan Constitution and the series of laws which regulated to the smallest detail the daily life of the Spartan, originated with Lycurgus. But it is more easy to understand the motives which prompted this leader, than to furnish information about him. Nobody knows precisely who he was, when he lived, or what he did. The date commonly accepted as that of Lycurgus is about the beginning of the ninth century B.C.

Put briefly, it was the intention of this ruler to counter the dangers which menaced the State by an excess of efficiency and devotion in the individual citizen. There is little doubt that the Spartan way of life was, in its inception, an essential to continued existence. Without it, these early Dorian invaders, few in number and surrounded by enemies, could never have survived. But so strongly were the fetters forged, that no subsequent increase in power availed appreciably to loosen them. Professor Jardé points out that the original Constitution did not remain unmodified, and further, that the modifications, when they were suggested, were put forward as a reversion to the Lycurgean ideal with a view to making them palatable, so that "the Sparta of Lycurgus thus owes many features to the Sparta of Agis and Cleomenes." But such changes as were made were not out of harmony

with the intentions of the original law, and do not affect the essential truth of Grote's remark that "It was the only Government in Greece which could trace an unbroken peaceable descent from a high antiquity, and from its real or supposed founder."

This was, we believe, the most astounding feature of the Spartan history, and it tends to show, as nothing else could do, the soundness of the foundation upon which the early law-giver erected his structure. We do not mean by this that the Spartan system was in any way desirable, we do not believe that it was. But it rested upon the only sure and certain basis, the character of the individual citizen. On every side of Sparta the Greeks shuffled and re-shuffled their Governments with the dexterity and speed of experienced card-sharpers. We doubt if there was a solitary Greek State which did not change its form of Government two or three or more times within the comparatively short space of the Peloponnesian War. Sparta alone maintained its Constitution unchanged, not because it was a good Constitution, but because the Spartan had been so compressed and restrained that he could conceive of no other. Almost invariably in the history of the world Governments have been designed either without regard to the individual characters of the citizens or at best to conform to the requirements of a majority amongst them. Sparta is one of the extremely rare instances in which the citizen was moulded and trained until he conformed with absolute exactness to the needs of the Government. Individuality amongst the Spartans was almost unknown. The machine turned out a fighting unit of extraordinary power, and each unit almost exactly resembled every other unit. The Constitution had made the Spartan in its own image.

It is probably the case that many of the current ideas about ancient Greece are incorrect. Comparatively

meagre sources of information are open to us and we are rarely able to gauge the vanity, credulity or political or other motive that prompted such historians as there are. In short, the modern tendency to quote Plutarch or Xenophon, to take two names at random, as though that settled the matter, is sometimes a dangerous one. This is particularly the case with Sparta. Every writer averse to democracy exaggerated her virtues; every writer concerned to defend the democrats magnified her failings. Where is truth? Somewhere, doubtless, where common sense would expect to find it.

By the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, the two hereditary Kings of Sparta had lost their power and except upon the field of battle, where they were ex-officio commanders-in-chief, they exerted but a limited influence. To avoid conflict in the Army, only one King might accompany the troops at a time. The origin of the dual king-ship is probably to be found in the early union of two distinct groups of Dorians, a union brought about by the need for common defensive action, and which did not extend any further. But however that may be, the dual hereditary king-ship existed, although the kings were little more than figure-heads.

In Sparta there were no nobles, and, as we have noted, for many years there were no citizens of outstanding wealth. In the requirements of their military discipline all were equal and this equality extended also to political matters. High office alone raised a man above his fellows, but the dignity attached to the post and not to the individual, who on relinquishing office became again an equal amongst equals.

The equality of the Spartans in political matters was an equality in impotence. All full-blooded Spartans over 30 years of age were invited to vote at the Assembly, which met every month; but although they might vote they had no power to decide the issues upon which the

decisions were to be taken. The Spartan, as a member of the Assembly, could listen to the remarks of Ephors or Kings upon some proposal referred by the Senate, and he could contribute by the vehemence with which he shouted "yea" or "nay" to a decision for or against it. But he could not argue about it; still less could he say "Now, gentlemen, I desire to direct your attention to this or that outstanding abuse."

The only real power exercised by the Assembly was the appointment of Members of the Senate or Council of Elders, and the Ephors. It is probable, however, that the appointment of the Ephors was less a matter of chance than the casual methods of the Assembly would suggest. It is possible that in practice the Assembly merely ratified an appointment determined upon in advance by the Senate.

The Senate consisted of the two Kings and 28 citizens appointed for life. The sole qualification for office was the attainment of 60 years of age. It was the Senate that controlled the foreign policy of the State and indicated the questions upon which the Assembly was expected to vote.

The Ephors, five in number, held office for one year. The steps by which such great power found its way into the hands of these popularly elected magistrates cannot now be determined, although it would appear probable that they were first appointed to off-set the power of the Kings. It is generally agreed that although of ancient origin, they had no place in the Constitution of Lycurgus. Whibley, in an illuminating phrase, speaks of the Ephors as "concerned with the maintenance of discipline over the Spartiates." They superintended the education of the young and they had "general powers of control and punishment over the citizens, which extended to other magistrates and even to the Kings."

The Spartan Constitution did not admit of the written

law and the Ephor in consequence was at the same time the repository of the law, the authority who would interpret it, and the channel through which it was conveyed. From a decree appearing over his signature there was no appeal. The Ephors have been aptly termed the "dominant element in the Constitution." It is not without significance that in the presence of the Kings they alone remained seated.

It is difficult to reconcile the apparently unlimited power of the Ephors with the existence of the Senate. Jardé suggests that they were "as a rule simply the executive agents of the Gerousia" (i.e. the Senate). It is possible that this was the case, and that the Senate, composed of elderly men, left a wide discretion to the more active Ephors who by the annual change in their personnel were deprived of any incentive to intrigue. But nothing can be said with certainty upon this point. We know only that from the decision of the Government, originating with or conveyed through the Ephors, there was no appeal. No rule could have been more arbitrary or have operated with greater efficiency or more secrecy.

It will be seen at once that the Spartan Government contained many features peculiar to itself. Rarely has any Government been designed upon lines so utterly impersonal or so contemptuous of individual ability. Rarely, also, has there been designed any form of Government in which what was given by the right hand was so consistently withdrawn by the left. Any man of 30 years may vote in the Assembly—and his vote can accomplish little or nothing that affects his daily life. Any man of 60 is eligible for membership of the Senate—but 60 is comparatively an advanced age. Any Spartan may be appointed an Ephor,—but he holds office only for twelve months, and, at the end of that time, becomes once again an ordinary citizen, amenable to the ordinary law and without honours or reward.

For the best description which we have seen of the Spartan Constitution, it is necessary, once again, to quote Professor Jardé :

" In reality, the political organization of Sparta was that of an army ; the command was concentrated in a few hands, discipline enforced obedience in all ranks, and the only difference between one man and another was that of seniority in grade."

The Spartan people was divided into three classes, the full-blooded Spartan, the Periœci, and the Helots. The Spartan proper was the fully-qualified citizen, who resided in Sparta, and was amenable to Lycurgean discipline. For him, in theory, the State existed ; by him, in practice, it was maintained.

The Periœcus was a freeman, not of Sparta but of one or other of the towns recognizing Spartan rule. He was not permitted to marry a Spartan woman, had no voice in Spartan policy and was liable for military service either in the heavy-armed troops or with the fleet. He paid tribute to the Spartan kings, and, for an offence, was liable to be put to death without trial on the decree of an Ephor. On the other hand, in matters of local interest, the Periœcus enjoyed a considerable amount of independence, in some districts greater than in others, and, unlike the Spartan, he engaged in commerce. The numbers of the Periœci greatly exceeded those of the Spartans.

The Helots were serfs who in times of peace cultivated the lands of the Spartans and Periœci, and, in warfare, furnished the light-armed troops of the Lacedæmonian armies. Although, of necessity, they worked for individuals, they were slaves only in the sense that they were the property of the State. It was not in the power of the Spartan master to kill a Helot, to sell him, or to give him his liberty. The Helot lived either in villages or alone in the country surrounding Sparta and the towns of the Periœci. The rent paid by the Helot to the Spartan proprietor was paid in kind and was for a

fixed amount, so that an increase in production was a benefit to the Helot. Thus, the Helots, as time went on, lost something of the impoverished condition usually associated with them. Many writers of classical times paint lurid pictures of the misery of these people and the outrageous harshness with which the Spartan State dealt with them. If we may believe all we are told, it was a practice of the Spartans to train their young men for warfare by organized battues in which many Helots were run to earth and slain. However, such stories are extremely improbable.

None the less, the Helots constituted by far the largest part of the population of the State, and the Spartan never knew when the smouldering hatred with which they regarded their masters would break out into flame. Thus, even in times of peace, the Helots provided a menace that made the Spartan training a necessity rather than a custom. We are told that a Spartan, hanging up his shield before taking to rest, would remove the arm-piece, without which it could not be carried,—a significant precaution. More than once, the Spartans found it necessary to march against the Helots, as though they constituted a State with which Sparta was at war. We are told that about the time of the Pylos affair, the Spartans secretly did to death 2,000 of the bravest and most agile of the Helots for no other reason than that they would be likely to head a revolt should one take place.

As we have said, the Helots for the most part lived in the country, and by their agricultural labours made it possible for the Spartan to devote himself exclusively to military pursuits. A certain number, however, were to be found in Sparta itself, where they acted as servants in the Spartan home, for, apart from the Helots, the Spartan had no slaves.

As light-armed troops in time of war, the Helots were

held in high esteem by the Spartans, who employed them in increasing numbers as their own strength diminished. We have the authority of Thucydides for the statement that towards the close of the Peloponnesian War, a certain number were granted their freedom and served as hoplites.¹ It is, of course, quite possible that all the Helots did not view Sparta with the same ill-will, and that some were trusted, whilst others were terrorized.

The Spartan himself spent his entire life in warfare, or in preparedness for warfare. His training commenced at the age of 7, he started his military service at the age of 20, and he remained liable to serve until he was 60. It was not unusual for Spartans to take the field at the age of 55. He dined always at mess, with the comrades by whose side he would fight in battle. Until the age of 30 he always slept in barracks. He wore always his purple uniform upon which the ominous stains were scarcely distinguishable. In later days he still resided, by law, within Sparta, that he might be available at the first alarm; he could not go abroad without special permission.

At the back of these onerous conditions, there stood a fact which assisted to make them palatable. When Brasidas, one of the most successful of the Spartan commanders, told his troops: "We are a few in the midst of many enemies, and we can maintain ourselves only by fighting and conquering," it was the literal truth, and every Spartan knew it. For the number of the Spartans was not increasing. For many years it had steadily diminished. It is true that, as the numbers of the Spartans waned, those of the Perioeci and Helots increased, a fact which permitted the Lacedæmonian armies for a time to maintain their numerical strength in the field. But the Perioeci and Helots alike only served a Sparta able to enforce her will. As it was, the

¹ Heavy-armed infantry recruited originally from men of birth.

foreign policy of Sparta was constantly modified by the necessity for keeping the Helots in check. They were, in sober truth, “a few in the midst of many enemies.”

Another fact which doubtless mitigated the harshness of Spartan discipline, was that it was shared by all alike. There was no privileged class which assumed command by right of birth or riches. The life of every citizen was that of every other citizen. If it was an honour to be a Spartan rather than a Periœcus or a Helot, then it was an honour to undergo the Spartan discipline and training which was the outward sign of Spartan birth, and in which Periœcus and Helot might not participate.

We have spoken of the Spartan population as steadily diminishing, but the secrecy maintained by the Spartans makes it extremely difficult to give figures. We know that there were presumed to have been 10,000 Spartans in the days of Lycurgus, although this figure cannot be accepted as beyond criticism, and that from that time onwards the number constantly diminished. At the Battle of Platæa in 479 B.C. there were said to be 5,000 Spartans in the field, a number which had fallen to 700 at Leuctra in 371 B.C. But historians, even when aiming at precision, were wont to refer to the strength of the “Lacedæmonian” forces, and it is most frequently impossible to state what proportion of the whole was constituted by Spartans and what part by Perioeci and Helots. It is clear, however, that as time went on, the Periœci were called upon to an ever increasing extent, to take the place of Spartans amongst the heavy-armed troops. At Platæa the proportion appears to have been one Periœcus to one Spartan, at Leuctra there are two or three Perioeci to a Spartan. The Spartans, in fact, cease to constitute the heavy-armed portion of the army, and become by degrees merely the iron nucleus about which the Lacedæmonian forces are collected. Before the close of the Peloponnesian War the Spartans are

reckoned not by thousands but by hundreds. It is this fact that accounts for the extraordinary importance attached by the Spartans to the catastrophe at Sphacteria. Amongst the 1,300 or more men isolated upon the island, there were 420 Spartans of whom 128 were slain before the survivors agreed to ask the Ephors upon the mainland whether or no they might surrender. Not only is the necessary permission forthcoming, but Sparta offers peace to Athens upon most favourable terms in order to secure the return of the 292 survivors. The fact is, the Spartans are by this time so reduced in numbers that every individual Spartan is of importance. Spartan policy was compelled to consider, not merely the strength of those armies of Periœci and Helots with which she confronted Athens, but the number of the Spartans who alone could save the State if the Periœci and Helots should revolt.

We may well ask ourselves how a situation so fraught with danger to the State could have been brought about. The answer is to be found in those very ordinances which made the Spartan what he was. No weakly Spartan child was permitted to live, and from amongst those deemed fit to survive, the rigours of Spartan discipline must have taken heavy toll. From the age of seven years, in winter as in summer, the Spartan youth wore but the thinnest of clothing. He was insufficiently fed. He slept upon boards or stone with a layer of rushes. He was expected to engage in friendly contests in which arms were snapped and eyes gouged out. He was sent on lonely and hazardous duties, with no other protection than his dagger and his native wit, and not least, he was expected to endure without a murmur those rites of flogging before the altar of Artemis Orthia which sometimes were carried so far as to kill him.

The Spartan who survived was a terrible foe, but there must have been many who never reached the age of 30,

when for the first time the Spartan was permitted to sleep at home.

But it was not merely their training that took toll of the Spartans. Every custom that they had, their very pride, told against them. The Spartan was expected to conquer or to die where he stood, and this maxim was so thoroughly understood by the Greeks that the Athenians were far more astonished by the surrender of the Spartans at Sphacteria than they had been by the death of Leonidas and his 300 men at Thermopylæ. Thus defeat was far more disastrous to Sparta than to any other Greek city.

Again, not every Spartan by birth was a Spartan citizen. It was essential to citizenship that a man should be in receipt of a certain income from land. Unless he was in a position to meet his mess charges he could not serve. This clause alone sufficed to bar many a younger son. Such men did not become *Periceci*, but were known as "Inferiors," in distinction to the citizens who were known as "Equals." Although the Inferiors doubtless continued to be actuated by patriotic motives, they no longer resided in the city and lacked both the training and the spirit of the Equals, whose life was devoted to one end. But the rights of citizenship even when secured were easily forfeited; until the question of population became acute a comparatively small breach of the law might result in the loss of its doubtful privileges.

If we add to the causes we have set out the fact that Sparta was continually at war, and necessarily lost a certain number of her citizens, even when she was victorious, we cease to be surprised that the number of full-blooded Spartans eventually reached little more than a one-hundredth part of the total population of the State.

In such circumstances, in a state so disciplined, we should expect to find a high birth-rate. Except, however, that marriage was compulsory and that childless marriages



ENTRANCE TO THE PANTANASSA MONASTERY, MISTRA



were held in contempt, Spartan regulations are but little concerned with the size of the family. There is nothing that suggests that families of more than two or at the most three children were the rule, rather to the contrary.

When we turn, however, from the number of the children to the health of the child, the case is very different. But this brings us at once to the status of the Spartan woman, with her legendary virtues, and to the marital relationship of this strange race.

When we attempt to understand the Spartan woman we are beset at every turn by the natural desire of historians to find a result in keeping with their very proper expectations. It is difficult not to admire men who live only for the State and who respect womanhood, and we feel that the wives and daughters of such men must rise to their level. We are, in fact, indignant at any evidence to the contrary. None the less, women very rarely give respect where there is no authority. All women at heart are aware of this fact although men may have forgotten it. And it was the essential consequence of the Spartan regime that the husband's authority was curtailed at all points. He was bred and trained a fighting animal, and his life was not that of the home, but of the camp. From his youth upwards he was under a form of discipline designed to crush his individuality and to sap his initiative. To a Spartan the two paramount virtues were a habit of obedience and an ability, amounting to second nature, to accept the unpalatable without protest. To quote Grote :

“ The supervision, not only of his fellow-citizens, but also of authorized censors or captains nominated by the State, was perpetually acting upon him ; his days were passed in public exercises and meals, his nights in the public barrack to which he belonged.”

When military action or exercises did not claim his attention, he was called upon to observe “ a bearing shy, silent, and motionless as a statue.” Such men

collectively may be terrible to their enemies, but as individuals they will not secure the loyalty of women. Thus when Aristotle speaks of the Spartan woman's uncontrolled luxury and relaxation we feel that the fact is one which might reasonably be expected.

Whether such a state of things is to be regarded as a reflection upon the Spartan or otherwise, depends entirely upon the angle from which we view them. If we may accept the common-sense view that collective welfare is not worth having when it is purchased by the wretchedness of the individual, then the entire Spartan State was an absurdity. But if we are to take the Spartan ideal seriously, then the less his home life affected him the more he is to be commended.

In theory the Spartan attitude towards women was as much a matter of State policy as the military discipline imposed upon the man. The Spartan saw in a woman, not a wife, but a potential mother, and she was trained accordingly in every physical exercise that could make her hardy and strong. Unquestionably the Spartans achieved their end. The strength and vigour of Spartan women was acknowledged throughout Greece. On the other hand, Oman is probably correct when he tells us that they were "utterly destitute of all modesty and womanly feeling." But once again it is necessary to remember that between the Spartan and the educated male of to-day, there is an unbridgeable gulf. The Spartan necessarily was far less familiar than the Athenian or Corinthian with what may be termed the refinements of life. In short, so far from desiring modesty and womanly feeling, he was probably more incapable of appreciating these qualities than any day labourer of the present time. His requirements were simple. He asked merely that his wife should be physically strong so that his child might be without blemish. And this wish was certainly fulfilled,

For the stories that have grown up of the devotion of Spartan wives and the dignified grief of Spartan matrons we have very little respect. There was doubtless a convention in such matters which produced a certain uniformity of bearing in kindred circumstances. It is more to the point to remember that the devotion of women is not to be purchased lightly. It arises in those intimacies which for the Spartan were regulated by cast-iron law, and from that quality of essential maleness which in the Spartan found no outlet save in the rigours and the hardships of war. Marriage was so foreign to the true life of the Spartan that he enjoyed it for some years only by stealth¹; it was so little regarded by the women that it was not thought odd in them when they acknowledged two husbands and presided over two households at the same time. Devotion does not grow in such a soil.

Unfortunately, as we have already suggested, historians when called upon to deal with this side of Spartan life, frequently see only what they desire to see, and accept statements which in any other connection would arouse their suspicion. Professor Jardé, dealing with the matter of evidence only, and without special reference to the Spartan woman, puts the case very clearly :

“ In Athens especially, a whole group of Laconizers, out of aristocratic contempt for manual labour, and out of hatred of the mob which ruled the Assembly, took every opportunity to extol the . . . oligarchic Government of Sparta. It was these Laconizers who created the character of the Spartan endowed with every virtue . . . Zenophon and Plato, for whom nothing is perfect but Sparta, do not or will not see the dark parts of the picture.”

In short, it can scarcely be doubted that the Spartan woman was better formed, more healthy and possibly, although this is by no means so certain, more physically

¹ According to Plutarch, it might happen that a Spartan couple would have three children while they had scarcely seen each other by daylight.

attractive than the woman of any other part of Greece. Such was the natural result of her early physical training. Thereafter, although in theory she had no more legal rights than the Athenian girl, she had far more personal liberty, because the Spartan had little or no time to devote to her, and far more wealth because her husband, apart from her, had little or no use for his riches. The result was precisely what it always has been, and what in fact it still is, where such circumstances obtain. She became selfish, luxurious and exacting and earned for the Spartan the taunt of Greece that the Spartans were ruled by their wives.

That the Spartan way of life should have been so little modified over so many years, is at first sight extremely curious. However anxiously the Spartan may have been drilled and disciplined, it is certain that from time to time there must have appeared individuals prepared to advocate other measures. It is necessary to recollect, however, that the Spartan Ephors were able to resort to extreme measures with the utmost secrecy, and there is no doubt that all such men were dealt with almost before they themselves had realized where their logic was taking them. A Spartan citizen was necessarily a being in entire harmony, mental and physical, with the Spartan way of life. In no other circumstances could he have secured or retained his citizenship.

The influence exerted by strangers was almost negligible. Sparta, as we have seen, had little or no commercial importance. Trade was mostly by barter; the only money in currency was of iron, and this cannot have been in use in the everyday affairs of life. No stranger was permitted to settle in Laconia, and the Ephors might, and frequently did, call upon a visitor to Sparta to leave the city forthwith. In short, the risk that foreign opinions and customs might gradually permeate the State was reduced to a minimum.

The Spartan method of fighting was not unknown elsewhere in Greece, although the Spartans carried it to a much higher standard of efficiency. The Spartan himself was almost invariably a hoplite, that is he was armed with spear and sword, wore a helmet, cuirass and greaves and carried a bronze shield. The Cavalry was not held in high esteem and was in fact added to the Lacedæmonian army during the Peloponnesian War. The battle formation was that of the Phalanx, which by its weight and impetus in a charge usually crushed all opposition.

The real strength of the Spartans, however, lay not in their arms, but in their physical strength and agility, and still more, we believe, in their consciousness that they were man for man superior to any force that could come against them. The standard they set themselves, so infinitely higher than that of any other Grecian army, kept them unmoved when their allies were defeated, and when they themselves were menaced by disaster.

By the Greeks of their own day the Spartans were not regarded as a likeable people. Their intellectual dullness, combined as it was with an almost contemptuous manner, filled their contemporaries with fury and despair. We view them more dispassionately, but find ourselves similarly torn between great admiration and great contempt. It may indeed be the case that the Spartan should not be judged as a man—that he was something more, or something less, than that.

CHAPTER X

SPARTA AND MISTRA

“ Sparta needs no relics in stone : the site speaks for itself.”—
Sir R. C. JEBB, F.R.S.

TO be frank about it there is not very much of historic interest to be seen in Sparta to-day. None the less, the journey from Athens to Sparta, involving as it does a trip across the Peloponnesus, would be well worth making even if Sparta had never had a past. The most satisfactory method of making the journey is, in my opinion, by motor-car. As I have remarked elsewhere, Greek roads are not perfect, but the roads in the Peloponnesus although perhaps “ few and far between ” are not so bad as to make motor-ing an uncomfortable experience. It is one of the advantages of this means of transport that the tourist can choose his own route, and if the journey to Sparta is made via Corinth, Mycenæ and Nauplia, the visitor is able to combine a journey through the most charming scenery with visits to some of the most historically interesting spots in the world.

It is undoubtedly a drawback that Sparta does not boast a reasonable hotel. However, it is possible to secure a clean bed in a clean room, and the necessity which compels the tourist to take his meals in one or other of the small cafés to be found in the town is one for which eventually he is grateful. Every experience is useful, and I personally did not spend any time in Sparta which I cannot look back upon with pleasure.



A SCENE AT MISTRA

The tourist by car will presumably break his journey at Nauplia and will start off in the morning in good time, taking his lunch with him. Sparta will be reached about the middle of the afternoon. For mile after mile the road winds over and around the mountains of the Peloponnesus, and every now and then as the car turns some particularly abrupt corner high up on the hills the traveller will see goats, mules and goatherds scattering in all directions.

Sparta should be of particular interest to English travellers because it is here that the English School is at work. During the past year the School confined its attention to the Ancient Theatre, the Acropolis and certain outlying sites. So far as the Theatre is concerned, however, I believe I am correct in stating that for the most part the finds are of the Roman or Byzantine periods.

The work upon the Acropolis was greatly encouraged by the discovery of a marble statue, slightly larger than life-size, of a bearded warrior. This work, although damaged—the arms are missing—was of Parian marble and probably goes back to 480 B.C. I was very interested in this discovery since it occurred within a few weeks of a conversation which I had with the Head of the British School at Athens in which Mr. Woodward expressed the opinion that future discoveries within Greece were likely to be of a kind to interest the archæologist rather than the amateur. It is to be hoped that the statue at Sparta will not be the only surprise of the kind which the British School will receive. While referring to the School it may be of interest to mention that the work at Sparta was commenced in 1906 and has from that year continued intermittently. The main difficulty which the English have to contend with in this part of the world does not, however, lie in the soil but in the banks. Archæological work is highly expensive and I for one am inclined to regret that the British

School is not supported to the same extent as the American School. We have a very interesting site in Sparta and our archæologists are admittedly equal to those of any other nation. If archæological work is to be undertaken at all it should be possible for Great Britain to see that her representatives are not hampered for the lack of pounds, shillings and pence.

While the Spartan excavations will certainly make a very strong appeal to the archæologist, the uninformed visitor will find within a journey of an hour or so, one of the most intriguing and beautiful ruined cities in Greece. I refer to Mistra. No photograph of this spot can do it justice since the Byzantine buildings of the city, built up as they are into the side of the hill, do not lend themselves to photographic reproduction. It is suggested that Mistra ranked as a town of importance even in Homeric times and that the early town of Messe lies beneath the mediæval town of Mistra. If this is the case, this spot may one day become of the first importance to archæologists; but for my part I think I should prefer it as it exists at the present moment, deserted, almost ruined, a city of the dead.

High up in Mistra there is a convent and church in which the visitor will find even to-day a few pious nuns. The Mother Superior is not quite lost to the affairs of this world, and in exchange for a signature in her visitors' book and a donation towards the upkeep of the church, will produce a small but welcome cup of coffee.

The view from the convent across the olive groves and mulberry plantations of the plain to the mountains beyond is delightful, and altogether the climb upwards from the base of the hill, where one's car is necessarily left behind, is an unforgettable experience.

CHAPTER XI

MYCENÆ

“ All things which rise fall, and those which grow, grow old.”
—SALLUST.

THE traveller who has already had his interest in Mycenæ whetted by the remarkable display of Mycenæan relics in the Museum at Athens, will eagerly anticipate his visit to the site of the famous capital of the ill-starred house of Atreus—Mycenæ “ the golden,” “ the city of broad thoroughfares,” famed in the Homeric poems as the home of Agamemnon, the conqueror of Troy, and famed also for its wealth in gold. The railroad, as soon as it leaves Corinth, branches south into the Peloponnesus and into a storied land brimming with epic and legendary associations. The train halts at Phycitia, the station for Mycenæ, and thence the traveller has a two-mile walk, along a road that rises steadily to the point where the Mycenæ of to-day lies, deserted and desolate, on a hill rising out of the fertile Argive plain —“ in a recess of horse-pasturing Argos,” as Homer calls it. There is little in the way of remains to be seen along the grass-covered slopes which border the highroad, save here and there a trace of very old “ Cyclopean ” masonry, the remains of a city wall, or perhaps of an ancient highway, and the entrance to the remarkable avenue leading to the subterranean Tomb or Treasury of Atreus, of which I shall speak later. From here, the traveller follows a winding way leading right up to the main entrance of the Mycenæan acropolis, the giant Gate of the Lions.

Apart from the interest of the ruins themselves, the visitor may, I think, feel himself amply rewarded for his walk by the extreme picturesqueness of the site. Looking backward over the expansive view, from the height where Agamemnon looked down from his chief stronghold, he will have in sight the other strongholds of the mighty monarch's kingdom—Nauplia, Argos and Tiryns—at the other corners of the great plain. The situation of the ancient city was an extremely strong one, commanding as it did all the roads leading from Corinth and Achaea into the Argive plain. Three narrow, stoutly built highways have been traced, along which the wares of Mycenae must have been carried by mule to the Isthmus. Forwards, the site of Mycenae lies at the base of two sharply rising peaks, with a rocky foothill bearing the remains of the acropolis of the city. Here stood the palace of Atreus and his line, and here were made the remarkable discoveries which have added so much to modern research on ancient civilizations. From here Agamemnon set forth on the campaign against Troy; and here he returned after the sack of Priam's city, to find death at the hands of Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. Here came Orestes to avenge his father's death, and to go forth a hapless matricide haunted by Furies.

Mycenae consisted of two distinct parts—a high town or acropolis, and a lower town. The extant remains of the lower town are spread over the hill between the modern village of Charvati and the acropolis, and consist chiefly of those scanty traces which the traveller met on his way up the highroad, of town walls and houses and of bridges that spanned the mountain streams. The isolated rock which the acropolis or upper city occupies, commanding the mouth of the pass through which winds the road from Corinth to Argos, is about 1,000 feet long by 500 in width, and is curiously separated from the rest of the mountain by ravines which formed natural moats, in-

valuable as a protection against assault and even wide enough to make it almost impossible for missiles to be hurled effectively into the citadel from the other side. The walls of the acropolis have been preserved to a great height, crowning it in the shape of a great irregular triangle, on all but the south side, where there are no traces of a wall, either because they have been carried away by a landslip into the ravine, or because this side is itself sufficiently lofty and precipitous to serve as a fortification. The wall is for the most part of the construction known as Cyclopean ; that is to say, it is built of huge stones, generally irregular in form, with smaller stones forced into their interstices ; but certain portions, notably those near the chief gate, are constructed in the “ Pelasgic ” style, that is, in almost regular courses of squared stones, and there are also some later repairs in polygonal masonry.

Following the winding road up the last steep ascent, the visitor suddenly finds himself facing the famous Gate of the Lions, with the formidable city wall on his right hand and an amazingly thick projecting bastion on his left. The stones of the Lion Gate are so extremely massive that we cannot wonder local tradition attributed the work to the giant Cyclopes. The Lion Gate, unquestionably the most impressive of all the ruins at Mycenæ, stands at the north-west angle of the citadel, spanning a long narrow doorway between the walls of rock. To-day the visitor may still see the hinge-slots and the holes, into which the bolts were shot, cut into the huge stone blocks which form the gateposts. Across the massive gateposts is laid a still larger stone by way of lintel. The Cyclopean doorways have an interesting constructional peculiarity, in that the stones are so arranged as to leave a triangular opening at the top to lighten the centre of the lintel lest it fall by its own weight. In the Lion Gate, the triangular aperture is filled with a

light stone slab on which are sculptured the figures of two rampant lions, which give the gate its name. Between the two lions and with their forepaws resting on it, is an altar bearing a sculptured column, with a somewhat highly ornamented capital, marking the centre of the slab. Like most of the columns of the Mycenæan age, this column is represented as being larger at the top than at the base, recalling the fact that the stone pillars of those early days were faithful copies of the sharpened stakes which had been used as supports in still earlier times. The heads of the lions are gone—no one knows how or whither. It is generally agreed now that they must have been of metal—perhaps bronze—and that they were so placed as to seem to be looking down the road. This venerable piece of sculpture is probably one of the oldest still existing. Besides this main gate, the only other entrance in the whole length of the citadel is a postern gate on the north side of the wall; and at its east extremity there are two apertures in the thickness of the wall. One of these leads out on to the rocks above the south ravine and the other to a long staircase, completely concealed in the wall and the rocks, leading down to a subterranean well or spring.

The walls and gate of Mycenæ are the greatest monument that remains of the Heroic Age in Greece. Legend assigns to Mycenæ a foremost place in Hellas at a time long before the dawn of chronicled history. When the Greek states joined in the expedition against Troy, Agamemnon, then ruling in Mycenæ, became their supreme leader as a matter of course. Legend tells of a long-drawn rivalry between the dynasties of the Pelopidæ (the house of Atreus, descended from Pelops) at Mycenæ, and the Proetidæ at Argos. As early as 776 B.C., the dawn of authentic Greek history, the noon of Mycenæ's greatness was already past, and Argos had obtained the predominance. One last outward sign of her strength Mycenæ gave

when, in 479 B.C., freed for the moment, by Spartan aid, from Argive control, she sent troops to fight in the Greek cause at Platæa. In 460 B.C. the long warfare between the two cities ended ; Argos at last reduced and destroyed Mycenæ—all but the great walls, which proved stronger than the forces of destruction—and scattered its inhabitants. The city never revived and for nearly twenty-four centuries it did not figure in the drama of history. Then, in the year 1876 of our era, came Dr. Schliemann, with his dreams, and his excavators, and Mycenæ flashed once more into the limelight.

“ Many shall go to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” Learned and deliberate travellers in the Morea had, before Schliemann’s day, offered their quota to knowledge on the history of Mycenæ in their great tomes full of detailed description and erudite discussion. But the desolation of its ruins had led neither scholars nor marauders to hope for fortunate discoveries, and the citadel was left virgin ground for the explorations of Schliemann to realize his life’s dream and thereby to add such a contribution to the world’s store of archæological knowledge as had never before been imagined. The romantic career of Schliemann is worthy of far more space than can be afforded to it here. As a poor grocer’s boy his imagination was first fired by hearing the lines of Homer repeated by a drunken miller. Years later, as a prosperous merchant in the mid-forties, he set out to find the Troy of his dreams and prove that he was right about its site. He found it and dug it up. Whether he dug it well or badly and whether he was right or wrong in his conjectures as to what he found there, does not concern us here. The excavation of Troy belongs to the archæological story of Asia Minor, and not of Greece. A difference of opinion with the Turkish Government concerning the removal of some treasure, which led to difficulties in obtaining the permission to continue ex-

cavating in Turkish territory, proved to be a blessing in disguise, for it drove Schliemann to Mycenæ. Here, in 1878, he broke ground and began to bring to light discoveries much more startling and which raised infinitely more commotion in the learned world than the Trojan relics had done. H. R. Hall describes vividly how the learned world was “set by the ears”:

“At Mycenæ in 1878 Schliemann really did for a while seem to have, as he himself believed, disinterred Agamemnon, Clytaimnestra, and all the court of the golden Atridæ. Commotion is the only word that can describe the state of the scholarly mind at the discovery—commotion, and with many almost angry scepticism. The things were Byzantine; they were treasure buried by marauding Avars and Heruli; and so on. To students of European pre-history the fact that the new discoveries belonged to the Bronze Age was quite enough to give them their proper place in time, but some classical scholars, who were still under the impression that the Greeks of the fifth century used bronze swords, were not so easily adaptable. Others, however, realized the real importance of the finds at once, and opinion of real weight and importance soon crystallized into the view, which has been entirely justified by the Cretan discoveries, that, while not belonging to the Homeric period, the new discoveries were relics of a pre-Homeric culture of which reminiscences are seen in the poems; that they belonged, in fact, to the Heroic Age.”

When Schliemann came to Mycenæ there is every reason to believe the site wore the same aspect as when the eyes of the traveller Pausanias rested on its ruins nearly 1,600 years earlier.

“There remains of the city,” wrote Pausanias, “part of the circuit walls besides the gate on which stand lions, the work, they say, of the Cyclopes, who built for Proetus the wall at Tiryns; and amid the ruins is the spring called after Perseus, also the underground buildings of Atreus and his sons where they kept their treasures. There is also the grave of Atreus, and of those whom Ægisthus slew while feasting them on their return with Agamemnon from Troy. As to the tomb of Cassandra, that is also claimed by the Lacedæmonians of Amyclæ. There is a separate tomb of Agamemnon, also of his charioteer Eury-medon, and a common grave of Teledamus and Pelops, who were, they say, twin boys whom Cassandra bore, and whom Ægisthus slew while infants along with their parents. . . . But Clytem-

nestra and Ægisthus were buried a little way without the walls, being considered unworthy of a place within, where lay Agamemnon himself, and those who fell with him" (II, 16, 4).

The passage is important as having led—and to a certain extent perhaps misled—Schliemann in his investigation and deductions.

As Professor Percy Gardner observes,

"it is impossible to extract from this passage, which contains several ambiguities, any quite certain result. But, without entering into any long discussion . . . we may take it that Pausanias mistakes the citadel at Mycenæ to which the Lion Gate gives access for the city which lay around it in ruins. . . . The tombs of Agamemnon and his companions, and of Atreus and probably of Electra, were pointed out within the walls of the citadel, while the tomb of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra lay without those walls."

As one passes through the Lion Gate and enters the acropolis, there is on the right a curious circular enclosure, consisting of a double ring of thin flat stone slabs set up on end, with others laid flat across the top. Some authorities conjecture that this was the retaining wall for a tumulus or mound heaped up over the graves within, but the structure seems hardly solid enough for that purpose. According to Schliemann's hypothesis, this was the Agora where the elders sat around on the high circular wall, a picture difficult to visualize, unless the men in the land in those days were indeed giants. Howbeit, this strange stone circle was undoubtedly the Agora or a sacred enclosure of some kind, and here Schliemann sunk his shafts in search of the royal graves of Pausanias' account, and brought up so much that was wonderful from the five tombs he found. I cannot do better than quote from his own account of the beginning of the great enterprise ("Mycenæ," p. 61, f.).

"I began the great work on the 7th August, 1876, with sixty-three workmen, whom I divided into three parties. I put twelve men at the Lions' Gate, to open the passage into the Acropolis, I set forty-three to dig, at a distance of 4 feet from that gate,

a trench 113 feet long and 113 feet broad, and the remaining eight men I ordered to dig a trench on the south side of the Treasury in the lower city, near the Lions' Gate, in search of the entrance. But the soil at the Treasury was as hard as stone, and so full of large blocks, that it took me two weeks to dig only as far down as the upper end of the open triangular space above the door, from which I could calculate that the threshold would be 33 feet lower. I had also very hard work at the Lions' Gate, owing to the huge blocks by which the passage was obstructed, and which seem to have been hurled from the adjoining walls at the assailants, when the Acropolis was captured by the Argives in 468 B.C. . . .

"Immediately to the left, on entering the gate, I brought to light a small chamber, undoubtedly the ancient doorkeeper's habitation, the ceiling of which is formed by one huge slab. The chamber is only 4½ feet high, and it would not be to the taste of our present doorkeepers; but in the heroic age, comfort was unknown, particularly to slaves, and being unknown, it was unmissed. No ancient writer mentions the fact that Mycenæ was re inhabited after its capture by the Argives and the expulsion of its inhabitants. On the contrary, Diodorus Siculus, who lived at the time of Julius Cæsar and Augustus, after having described the tragic fate of Mycenæ, adds: 'This city, which was in ancient times blessed with wealth and power, which produced such great men and accomplished such important actions, was thus destroyed, and *remained uninhabited till the present time*' (XI, 65).

"That Mycenæ was uninhabited at the time of Strabo (that is, under Augustus), we must conclude from his remark: 'So that of the city of the Mycenæans *not even a vestige can now be found*' (Strabo, VIII). It was certainly also uninhabited at the time of Pausanias (A.D. 170), who describes its ruins. But I have brought to light most positive proofs that it had been again inhabited and that the new town must have existed for a long period, probably for more than two centuries; because there is at the surface of the Acropolis a layer of debris of the Hellenic time, which goes to an average depth of 3 feet. . . ."

Again ("Mycenæ," p. 335), he gives his declaration of faith:

" . . . I never doubted that a king of Mycenæ, by name Agamemnon, his charioteer Eurymedon, a Princess Cassandra, and their followers had been treacherously murdered either by Ægisthus at a banquet, 'like an ox at the manger,' as Homer says, or in the bath by Clytemnestra, as the later tragic poets represent; and I firmly believe in the statement of Pausanias, that

the murdered persons had been interred on the Acropolis. . . . My firm faith in the traditions made me undertake my late excavations in the Acropolis and led to the discovery of the five tombs with their immense treasures."

Daring statements these in days of Max-Müllerism, when every myth was a sun-myth, and "the Heroic Age" an idea to be relegated to the Valhalla of exploded theories!

Finally, Schliemann's telegram to the King of Greece, dated the 16th November, 1876, makes illuminating reading :

"A Sa Majesté le Roi George des Hellènes, Athènes

"Avec une extrême joie j'annonce à Votre Majesté que j'ai découvert les tombeaux que la tradition, dont Pausanias se fait l'écho, désignait comme les sépulcres d'Agamemnon, de Cassandra, d'Eurymédon et de leurs camarades, tous tués pendant le repas par Clytemnestre et son amant Egisthe. Ils étaient entourés d'un double cercle parallèle de plaques, qui ne peut avoir été érigé qu'en honneur des dits grands personnages. Jai trouvé dans les sépulcres des trésors immenses en fait d'objets archaïques en or pur. Ces trésors suffisent à eux seuls à remplir un grand musée, qui sera le plus merveilleux du monde, et qui, pendant des siècles à venir, attirera en Grèce des milliers d'étrangers de tous les pays. Comme je travaille par pur amour pour la science, je n'ai naturellement aucune prétention à ces trésors, que je donne, avec un vif enthousiasme, intacts à la Grèce. Que Dieu veuille que ces trésors deviennent la pierre angulaire d'une immense richesse nationale !

"Henry Schliemann

"Mycènes, 16 (28) Novembre, 1876."

There is little doubt that these were the graves that gave rise to the tradition Pausanias heard, but the historical identity of the persons buried there is a more

difficult question. According to Schliemann's reading, Pausanias had enumerated five graves, so having found five graves he stopped. But a sixth was opened up afterwards by the Greek Archaeological Society. Archaeological evidence has since been much used to prove that

"the graves that Schliemann found are not only much older than the time of Agamemnon, but that they were family vaults, the interments in each grave covering a period of perhaps twenty-five to fifty years. This is shown by the fact that the gold ornaments vary not only in different graves but in the same grave. The form of the cover of the great third grave showed that it was meant to be removed for successive interments."¹

Yet, even if we have to admit that Schliemann, prompted by his own fond hopes and preconceived ideas, jumped too readily to agreeable conclusions, such a wealth of gold and treasure as his excavations of these tombs brought to light makes it reasonable to believe that they may well have been the last resting-place of a royal line. The layman, unhampered by points of scholarship, is free to please himself whether or not he will believe that the mortal remains of the "prince of men" himself be among them.

The famous "shaft-graves" are alike in plan, though differing in size, being in the form of a rectangle hewn in the rock. They are generally agreed by the archaeologists to be contemporary with the first two "Late Minoan" periods, i.e., their probable dates range from 1700 B.C. to 1450 B.C. Schliemann found stones over the tombs, with spiral ornaments and scenes of war and the chase carved on them. The tombs were found to contain the remains of nineteen bodies, which had apparently been partially burnt before burial. It is a perhaps insignificant, but not uninteresting, coincidence that to the man who, from his long mercantile career, was led

¹ Richardson, "Greece through the Stereoscope," 160.

to attach much importance to the intrinsic value of his finds, it should have been given to exhume the most important gold finds and the choicest treasures of prehistoric art yet laid bare by spade of the archæologist. But the gift of this immense treasure to the Museum at Athens proved how purely scientific were his interests. Gold was everywhere. In two of the graves the dead were completely covered up with gold. There were gold vessels, far more numerous and beautiful than those he had found at Troy, gold dishes with the most exquisite designs, a little gold sanctuary of Aphrodite and her doves, two pairs of golden balances, the golden portrait and masks to cover the faces of the dead. There were also an ox-head in silver, numerous diadems, buttons, sword-hilts and so forth, stamped with rosettes and other ornamental devices. There were bronze swords, two of them inlaid with scenes in gold and silver, of a lion-hunt and a fishing expedition respectively, and a third with a series of flying gryphons in relief.

All round the citadel are traces of other habitations and dwelling-houses, but these are so congested that it is very evident that Homer's epithet, "Mycenæ of the broad streets," must have been applied to the lower city and not to this particular section. Above is a pathway, far too steep for chariots, leading to the remains of a Palace, exhumed in 1887 by Mr. Tsountas for the Greek Archæological Society. Here, as in the Royal Palace at Tiryns, may be traced the most essential parts of a Homeric house—the courtyard, approached in this instance by a staircase, the portico, the ante-chamber, and the *Megaron* or men's apartment, with a hearth in the middle of it. Of course, it is practically flat to-day, save for a bit of pavement here and there and a fragment or two of wall. We may quite reasonably suppose this to have been Agamemnon's palace, where Clytemnestra spent the ten years of her lord's absence, brooding over the sacrifice

of her child Iphigenia, yielding to the love and wiles of Ægisthus, and planning ignominious death for the returning conqueror.

Below the acropolis, to the west and south-west, lies the lower city of Mycenæ, stretching along a ridge which descends gradually to the plain on one side and sharply, on the other, to the modern road which the traveller must ascend from Phycitia. The most important remains of this section of the city are the "beehive" tombs of which three have been found inside the area of the town and five outside it. Of these, the best-known is the "Treasury of Atreus" or "Tomb of Agamemnon," another of the structures over which controversy has raged long and fiercely, the problem being, as the alternative names imply, whether it is a treasury or a tomb. As the Treasury of Atreus, it had always been known to the Greeks, and as such Schliemann, who obviously could not recognize another tomb of Agamemnon, accepted it when he excavated it in 1876. It has since been completely cleared by the Greek Archaeological Society and can now be easily explored. The exploration is worth while, since it is a complete type of these underground chambers. It is a domed room, approached by a long cut forming a curious lane in the hillside, with a well-hewn stone wall on either side, and ending in a tall narrow door. The lintel of this door consists of a great flat stone, the typical Mycenæan triangular opening over it, but the triangular slab which presumably once filled the opening is gone. The exact measurements of the enormous lintel-stone are given by Dr. Schliemann in "Mycenæ." Within is the domed, beehive-shaped chamber, about 50 feet in height and diameter, huge and re-echoing. It is lined throughout with stone, which bears indications of having been once faced with plates of bronze. The only light comes from the doorway and the triangular opening over it. On the right and left of this doorway lie bases which once sup-

ported half-columns of green basalt, tapering downwards like the sculptured column on the Lion Gate, and decorated with spiral and zigzag patterns. The considerable remains of these columns have found their abiding-place in the British Museum. Alabaster half-columns support a tiny ante-chamber, and the ruins round the entrance gateway show that a sculptured façade once made it beautiful.

This so-called tomb of Agamemnon intrigued me greatly. Standing within the dark interior of this great structure, its resemblance to a gigantic hive is immediately apparent. It is impossible not to wonder what pattern prompted the architect or why so vast and gloomy a place was fashioned if it were not to constitute the last resting-place of some great man. Speaking always as one who claims no knowledge in such matters, I cannot avoid the impression that too much controversy has raged about the possible association of this structure with Agamemnon. It is frequently taken for granted that if it is not the tomb of the great king it cannot have been a tomb at all. But is this so certain?

Another of these vaulted sepulchres or treasures lies about one-third of a mile further along the main road, opposite the west side of the citadel. This is known as the Treasury of Clytemnestra, which was partially excavated by Dr. Schliemann in 1876 and completely cleared by the Greek Archæological Society in 1891-92. Its entire arrangement resembles that of the Treasury of Atreus, but in no way approaches the perfect condition of the latter; the upper part has fallen in and it is otherwise in considerable disrepair. The other tombs are in a still more dilapidated condition and are much more primitive in construction. In addition to these large beehive tombs a number of smaller tombs have been found on the slopes around Mycenæ.

“These are especially interesting as having been found in groups, a circumstance which would tend to show that Mycenæ

originally consisted of a series of village settlements grouped round a fortified acropolis. Recently discovered cemeteries at Thebes point to a similar arrangement in the earliest settlements of that place.”¹

The objects found in the tombs of the lower town of Mycenæ are generally regarded as of a later date than those of the shaft-graves of the acropolis, and as ranging roughly from 1450 to 1100 B.C.

As to the question whether these chambers are tombs or treasuries, the weight of learned opinion seems to incline to the theory that they were tombs. Discussing the one known as the “Treasury of Atreus,” Mahaffy thus sums up the views which incline him to the tomb-theory.

(1) “There are three other similar buildings quite close to it which Pausanias mentions as the treasure-houses of the sons of Atreus, but their number makes it most unlikely that any of them could be for treasure. Surely such a house could only be owned by the reigning king, and there is no reason why his successor should make himself a new vault for this purpose.”

(2) “These buildings were all underground and dark, and exactly such as would be selected for tombs.”

(3) “They are not situated within the enclosure of the citadel of Mycenæ, but are outside it, and probably outside the original town altogether, a thing quite inconceivable if they were meant for treasure, but most reasonable, and according to all analogy, if they were used as tombs. This, too, would of course explain the plurality of them—different kings having built them, just like the pyramids of Chufu, Safra, and Menkerah, on the plain of Memphis in Egypt. It is even quite easy and natural to explain on this hypothesis how they came to be thought treasure-houses. It is known that the sepulchral tumuli of similar construction in other places, and possibly built by kindred people, contained much treasure, left there by way of honour to the deceased. Herodotus describes this in Scythian tombs, some of which have been opened of late, and have verified his assertions.”²

On the other hand, if the structure known as the Treasury of Atreus was a tomb, then there must have

¹ F. K. Marshall, “Discovery in Greek Lands.”

² J. P. Mahaffy, “Rambles and Studies in Greece.”

been two entirely different styles of burial in practice among the Mycenæans. The tombs found above on the acropolis seem unmistakably to have contained the bones of royalty, certainly of people of sufficient consequence to be buried with all possible pomp and honour—but the Treasury of Atreus would have made an infinitely more imposing sepulchre. Nor were any bones found in the Treasury of Atreus. . . . So the scale swings with a weight of evidence on either side. The layman visitor will be wise to leave such matters to the specialist, and to devote himself instead to admiring the ingenuity of the construction of this subterranean treasure-house, with its superposed tiers of stone, each course slightly overlapping the one below, so as to converge at last in a point at the top, forming—in architectural parlance—a corbelled as opposed to the true arch.

Whilst still engaged upon this work an account has reached me of the important discoveries effected by the Swedish Archæological Expedition near Dendra. The beehive tomb cleared by the Expedition has yielded the most important results. As regards size, this tomb is smaller than those to which I have already referred. The finds appear to have included the remains of offerings and fragments of bronze and ivory. The graves themselves go down to a depth of nearly 6 feet below the floor of the chamber. In one grave lay two skeletons, surrounded by the treasures placed there probably more than 3,000 years ago. The skeletons lay on beds of clay and were covered from head to foot with gold and silver ornaments ; the most valuable of the finds was a magnificent golden cup 18 centimetres in diameter, ornamented by what has been termed a submarine seascape. A second golden cup was found near the breast of the second skeleton, which is thought to have been that of a female. On the lower part of the male skeleton lay two silver vases, a gold cup sheeted with silver on the outside, and a bronze vessel.

A necklace of gold beads, a lamp of steatite and a vase made of an ostrich egg, ornamented by gold, silver and bronze, were also found here.

It is held by the Swedish archæologists that the tomb can scarcely be earlier than 1350 B.C. The interesting suggestion is made that quite possibly some of the treasures may be considerably older than the tomb itself, and have been buried with the skeletons as valuable antiques.

It would be useless to attempt any detailed description of the treasures unearthed at Mycenæ in a book of this nature. Not only the gold and the gems, but shattered pieces of potsherd testify to the high cultural level of these people whose civilization was contemporary with that of Troy. The beautiful spiral decorations and the lovely shapes of the vases go far to recompense one for the shaky technique which the Mycenæan artists display when attempting the human figure. Homer's shields, described with such a loving interest, his splendid cups and palaces of magic beauty had not all been evolved out of the imagination of the poet. Now we have the great civilization of the Mycenæan period before our eyes, we can no longer doubt that the poet of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, be his themes facts or legends, was writing of the things he knew, and the setting of the poems was as true of their times, in details of the modes and means of life, as is that of any modern drama. Many of the gold ornaments which Schliemann found in the course of his excavations disclosed designs of seaweed, cuttlefish, shellfish and other fantastic notions from the sea, suggesting that there was some truth in the ancient tradition that the builders of Mycenæ came from over the sea. It was the examination of these strange art-forms, then and afterwards, when they were found repeated elsewhere and on other materials, that led scholars to seek some country of early civilization from which they could have



TYPICAL GREEK SCENE NEAR KEPHISIA

spread and ultimately to find it across the Mediterranean in Crete. Schliemann, the self-taught seeker, working on knowledge painfully acquired, and in direct opposition to the opinions of his scientific and professional contemporaries, found what he sought where he knew it must be and where expert professional opinion said it could not possibly be. It is probable that Schliemann himself had but a dim perception of the far-reaching importance of his discoveries, and indeed "builded greater than he knew."

One final note deserves to be added to this chapter. When visiting Greece early in 1925 I had the good fortune to meet Mr. Andreas C. Michalopoulos who for many years was intimately associated with M. Venezelos. Speaking of the trip which in company with M. Venezelos he made to Bolivia, Mr. Michalopoulos informed me that he had been greatly struck by the similarity existing between archæological finds in that country and those made at Mycenæ. If my memory serves me correctly, even the famous Lions of Mycenæ are to be found in replica amongst the trophies of pre-historic Bolivia. Mr. Michalopoulos was quite unable to account for a resemblance which in many respects was really astonishing. Clearly there cannot have been any real connection between the ancient civilization of Mycenæ and that of the New World. Mr. Michalopoulos could only suggest that civilization in each country had for many years progressed along parallel lines and that the cause being similar, like effects followed. The suggestion is an extremely interesting one and no doubt will be fully investigated at some future date.

CHAPTER XII

DELPHI—THE ORACLE

“Who knows the end supreme of all things, and all the ways that lead thereto; the number of the leaves that the earth putteth forth in the Spring; the number of the sands that in the sea and the rivers are driven before the waves and the rushing winds; that which is to be, and whence it is to come.”—PINDAR.

THE history of Delphi, unlike the history of most ancient sites in Greece, makes a direct appeal to the modern mind. For we have at Delphi something more than the mere foundation of a temple. Delphi, except to the student and the archæologist, suggests in the first instance, the Oracle, and the Oracle again presupposes those powers of divination, or at least of ingenious anticipation, which throughout history have never ceased to perplex mankind.

Of the ancient history of the site it is necessary to speak with care, since for many years the uncertain work of man is almost inextricably entangled with the legendary activities of the gods. It is interesting to note in passing, however, that the worship of Apollo did not originate at Delphi or even in Greece. Probably the cult of Apollo reached Hellas from Asia. But, however that may be, the god entered Greece from without, and appropriated sites already dedicated to other and less known deities. One site so appropriated was Delphi. It should not be thought, however, that the victory was always complete. The dispossessed deities might be thrust into the background, their statues overthrown, their very names forgotten, but, more often than not, some part of their

worship, some obscure but still cherished custom, would survive.

This, it is believed, was the case with the Oracle. Both Plutarch and Diodorus mention the vapours which, escaping from a cleft in the rock, induced the gift of prophecy and tell us that the spot was dedicated to Ge, the Earth-goddess. In short, it can scarcely be disputed that Delphi was the seat of prophecy long before the Oracle became associated with the worship of Apollo. There was nothing unique in this fact, however. Other Oracles existed and doubtless were equally famous within their own areas. But it was left for Apollo to send the fame of the Delphic Oracle throughout the then civilized world.

At this point we may, perhaps, digress to mention one aspect of the Ge legend which is not without interest. The Earth-goddess was worshipped only in a few towns on either side of the Gulf of Corinth, where, that is, seismic disturbances would occur from time to time. From her haunt amongst the shades in the nether world, this goddess was believed to send dreams and warnings to the living. Thus the Oracle was held to be, as it were, merely an extension of the warning dream. Similarly the Goddess of Night was held to be the Mother of Dreams, and certain ancient authors went so far as to suggest that it was Night who phrased the replies delivered by the Delphic Priestess. It may, however, readily be perceived that their faith in the Earth-goddess, who, from below the troubled rocks of Central Greece, sent dreams of hope or warning, would predispose the ancient Greeks to accept those warnings which issued, as it were, from the very earth itself. For, to the ancient Greeks, the Delphic prophetess was no more than the organ by means of which the inspired vapours became audible.

Ge, more fortunate than some of the more ancient deities, was still remembered in Delphi after Apollo had commenced his reign ; for Plutarch tells us that, on a

visit to Delphi, he saw "the sanctuary and pool of Ge." This sanctuary has been re-discovered south of the foundation wall of the Temple of Apollo, and must have lain in historic times below the level of the surrounding ground.

It is frequently easier to understand how legends have grown than how they originated. We have, however, a plausible story of the discovery of the inspiring vapours in the writings of Diodorus (*circa* 50 B.C.). A goatherd, he tells us, wandering with his flock, came by chance near the cleft in the rock, and presently perceived that one of his goats which had approached the nearest, had commenced to dance and to emit loud cries. Other goats joined the first, only to be similarly affected. Finally, the goatherd, moved by curiosity, himself approached the cleft, at which he also was overcome. The tale spread. Other shepherds and villagers made their appearance, and the effect of the fumes being always to overcome the senses of those who inhaled them, the reputation of the cleft in the rock as the seat of divine power became firmly established.

Like most legends which deal with the origin of a religion, this story must be accepted with suspicion. We can, however, say with certainty that, however the Oracle may have originated, the locality in which it operated was precisely that which we should expect, in view of the fact that dreams and warnings were attributed to the Earth-goddess.

"We have at Delphi," a writer remarks, "all the elements necessary to constitute a shrine of Earth; a sacred tree, a fountain, a cleft in the ground, and withal a scenery of stern and awful majesty, where mountains and rocks seemed cleft as by some giant hand, and where repeated rumblings and shocks of earthquake seemed to bespeak the presence of the unseen powers of Nature."

And here it may be remarked that, while Diodorus, Plutarch, Strabo and other writers unite to attribute the powers of the Oracle to the sacred gases, the French,

whose excavations at Delphi have contributed so largely to our more recently acquired knowledge of the site, have entirely failed to trace the fissure or chasm through which the gases are said to have risen. But this does not necessarily prove that the legends are entirely without authority, since, in any event, more than one fissure or chasm which existed in the time of the Oracle must have been obliterated by subsequent earthquakes. This explanation gains strength from the fact that the prophetic shrine, which is thought to have been a cave below the level of the Temple—for the Pythia is described as “descending” to consult the Oracle—is also undiscovered. In short, it is still a reasonable suggestion that the origin of the Oracle may be traced to the effect of noxious gases.

How the cult of Apollo came to supersede the worship of Ge is not certain. Stone tablets discovered by the French archæologists suggest that the Earth-goddess voluntarily resigned the Oracle to Apollo. Legends, on the other hand, speak of severe conflicts. Probably both stories are true, to some extent, since the will of the god could only be interpreted by the actions of his followers, and mankind at such times will always divide itself into two schools, the comparatively few who are prepared actively to assist or to resist the innovation, and the great body of apathetic opinion which desires only to be permitted to believe with the greatest numbers. To the latter, the theory of voluntary resignation on the part of Ge must have appeared convincing, if only by reason of its extreme convenience. Mr. Frederik Poulsen, in his important work on Delphi, suggests that the victories gained by Apollo may not be unconnected with the Dorian migrations from Thessaly, which lay, of course, considerably to the north of Delphi. These migrations took place at the conclusion of the second millennium B.C., and in the course of them :

“ . . . not only were the Mycenean citadels laid in ruins, but certainly many old cults had to give way to new ones. To the fact that the Dorians brought Apollo with them, after having earlier received him from Asia Minor, points the circumstance that Arcadia, the only country not touched by their migrations, had next to no sanctuaries of Apollo. Moreover, Pindar sings of Apollo as the leader of the Dorian wanderings, who led the Dorians to Lacedæmon, Argos and Pylos.”

Apollo, however, although supreme in Delphi, was not destined to exercise undivided rule, for a new god shortly makes his appearance in the figure of Dionysus, son of Zeus and Semele. Dionysus entered Greece from Thrace, and, being the god of wine, secured many adherents amongst that section of the population that was not averse to an occasional orgy. Women especially succumbed in large numbers to the attractions of the Bacchic frenzy ; so much so, indeed, that more than one powerful personage, notably Lycurgus, King of the Edonians, endeavoured to interfere with the due observance of these religious rites. In the course of time, however, Dionysus secured general acceptance in his double capacity as the god of fertilization and the wine god, and thereafter, from 582 B.C. or slightly earlier, he reigned at Delphi jointly with Apollo. The Apollo-Dionysus concordat is not without interest, and inevitably gives rise to the question how far the legends of the gods were the outcome of mundane circumstances, and to what extent they embody an attempt to invest the machinery of Nature with a religious significance. At any rate, the Greeks adopted the belief that Apollo retired to the land of the Hyperboreans during the three winter months, and that, until his return, Dionysus reigned in Delphi in his stead.

Sophocles refers to Dionysus in the *Antigone*, and tells us :

“ Surrounded by the light of torches, he stands high on the twin summits of Parnassus, while the Corycian nymphs dance round him as Bacchantes, and the waters of Castalia sound from

the depth below. Up there in the snow and winter darkness, Dionysus rules in the long night, while troops of Mænads swarm round him, himself the choir-leader for the dance of the stars and quick of hearing for every sound in the waste of night.”

The Oracle, however, remained the peculiar possession of Apollo, and when that god was roaming far from the sacred city, the Oracle was dumb, to reawaken only with his return in the Spring.

The reaction of the two cults each upon the other is thus summed up by Mr. Poulsen, to whose work on Delphi we have already referred.

“ . . . this mixture of a Dionysiac element in the cult of Apollo increased its orgiastic character. Apollo . . . takes his abode in the body of the priestess, and liberates her soul, so that she speaks ‘with frantic lips.’ Dionysus brings more fiery excitement into the religion of Apollo, but, on the other hand, much points to the fact that Apollo reacted on the cult of Dionysus, and gave Hellenic moderation and beauty to its ecstasy.”

However simple the ceremonial of the Oracle may have been originally, it rapidly became invested with those trappings and refinements which all religions find indispensable, and the deliveries of the priestess were soon attended by every circumstance that could augment their importance.

It is curious that, from the first, the Oracle should have spoken through the mouth of a woman. The sensitive nervous organization of women would, of course, lend itself more readily than that of men to the attainment of a state of frenzy, but it is probable that the appointment of a prophetess was, in the first instance, less a matter of calculation than of custom, although why woman should so frequently have been the preferred instrument for divining the past, or foretelling the future, is a nice question. When the Oracle was most in request, from about the seventh century B.C., three priestesses were employed; during the Roman times, however, the Oracle had lost much of its fame, and one priestess again sufficed.

In the early days of the Oracle the priestess was youthful and a virgin. An attempted assault, however, brought about the appointment of matrons and married women, who, however, to maintain tradition, were dressed as girls. All priestesses were alike known as the Pythia (*πυθία*), the name being derived from the legendary combat in which Apollo vanquished the dragon or monster, charged by Earth with the guardianship of her shrine.

We have already remarked upon the ceremonial which added importance to the Oracle. We are told that before undertaking her sacred duties, the priestess fasted, bathed in Castalia, and chewed laurel leaves or inhaled the vapours of burnt laurel and myrrh. The effect of these preparations upon the more or less hysterical state of the priestess was such as to cause her to give her replies in a kind of divine frenzy.¹ But other, and possibly more reputable factors, combined to add prestige to the Oracle. Not the least of these was the fact that it was not always available. As we have seen, the winter months were, in any event, dead months. But even during the "oracular season" Apollo was not always to be summoned. There were days when the greatest were to be seen awaiting Apollo's pleasure. And such is human nature, that the monarch who was compelled to cool his heels in Delphi while the Oracle was closed, probably valued the Oracular utterance, when he received it, all the more, for the difficulty he had experienced in obtaining it. To the common run of mankind, however, the in-

¹ It would be interesting to know to what extent the frenzies of the first priestess or prophet originated in the subtle influence of the laurel. Mr. F. W. H. Myers, after stating an instance in which laurel water suggested a state of mind akin to religious frenzy in a certain individual, remarks that, "It becomes a very possible supposition that some part, at least, of the tremors and ecstasies of later prophetesses consisted in a repetition by suggestion or tradition of the excitement which is some *πρωτόμαρτις* was genuine and uncontrollable" ("Proceedings of the Soc. of Psychological Research," IV, p. 152).

dependence of the Oracle was an additional proof of its sanctity. Who but a god would deny a king?

Women, we may note, might consult the Oracle, but only by male proxy. Even the greatest of men, however, could not approach the Oracle and put his question without first performing the rite of bathing in the sacred fountain of Castalia, and sacrificing upon the altar in the Temple. The rites for the poorest man were the same, except that a cake might replace the goat or sheep upon the altar. The Oracle, in short, never became the servant of those who consulted it. While the Temple of Apollo would accept the gifts of the pilgrims, the Oracle remained, as it were, aloof, apparently uninfluenced either by the rank of the enquirer, or the munificence of his generosity.

The replies of the Oracle were originally delivered in hexameter verse, but later, as a result, it is thought, of metrical faults which more than one poet pointed out, they were delivered in prose.¹

No doubt in its earliest days the Oracle was consulted only by local, and not over-critical, enquirers, but as its fame spread, the standing of the questioner and the nature of the question alike gained in importance; the swain who hesitated to marry was replaced by the king who hesitated to make war. And here it may be remarked that the Oracle was invariably vague in its replies, and further, that the construction subsequently placed upon its utterances was frequently at variance with their meaning. The Oracle, in short, was sometimes hard put to it to save its face.

None the less, when every allowance has been made for

¹ Mr. F. W. H. Myers, in his "Essay on Greek Oracles," whilst admitting the "roughness of rhythm which seems unworthy of the divine inventor of the hexameter," remarks that, "Bald though the god's style may often be, he possesses, at any rate, a sounder notion of meter than some of his German critics."

intentional ambiguity, its replies must frequently have been inspired by knowledge to which the questioner had not access. We must remember that, at the height of its fame, the Oracle was visited by men of importance from all parts of the civilized world, and the information which they would bring undoubtedly tended to keep the priests of Apollo exceptionally well informed. Delphi, in those days, has been likened to an immense Intelligence Bureau, and the simile is not inapt. An illustration of the extent of Delphic information and the use to which it could be put, is furnished by the reply to the Cyrenians who were directed to leave their dwelling-place on the coast of North Africa, and proceed into the interior to a place where "the sky was more perforated." In giving this advice to the dissatisfied exiles, the priests of Apollo were making judicious use of information relative to the annual rainfall which other settlers had already given them. And here we may note, in passing, that the foundation of a city had for the Greeks a religious significance, so that no colony was founded by the Greek peoples without the encouragement of the Oracle. It may readily be understood from this fact how comparatively intimate was the connection between the leaders of distant colonies and the priests of Delphi, and how surprisingly well-informed upon distant affairs the Oracle at times must have appeared to be.

In those cases in which it could derive no assistance from what might perhaps be termed "inside information," the Oracle showed at times a mischievous humour that utterly baffles the student who desires to trace the procedure of cause and effect. So baffling, indeed, is the problem that we find one writer gravely explaining the Oracle on the principle of demon possession. Another, taking a more hopeful view of the situation, finds in Delphi the seeds of a religion akin to spiritualism, and one well fitted, he thinks, to reform a world admittedly

not in the most satisfactory condition. Yet a third writer dismisses the astounding with a guffaw. It is all very difficult. Nero, for instance, consults the Oracle, and is advised “to beware of 73.” Not unnaturally, the Emperor believes that he will be in danger of death, and possibly die, at the age of 73, and, being at the time considerably less than this age, he is not over-perturbed. But what occurs? At the age of 32 Nero is driven from the throne and, with assistance, commits suicide. Where, then, does the “73” come into the matter?—it was the age of his successor, Galba. To take another instance, the Oracle warned Epaminondas to beware of Pelagos. Naturally enough, *πέλαγος* being the Greek for “sea,” Epaminondas shuns the water, only, however, to die on dry land within a short distance of a wood in Arcadia. Where, then, does “Pelagos” come into this?—it was the name of the wood.

There is, however, one instance of Delphian ambiguity which has become historic. Croesus, King of Lydia, desiring to make war upon the Persians, decided to test a number of Oracles and to consult that one which emerged most successfully from the test. In short, he was not prepared to run any risk of a mistake. With this intention, he despatched messengers with costly presents to the chosen Oracles, asking each the same question—what he was doing at the precise moment the question was put. Croesus jealously guarded the nature of the question, and took infinite precautions to ensure the accuracy of the test. Delphi alone gave the correct answer, which Herodotus thus quotes:

“I know the number of the sands and the measure of the sea; I understand the dumb and hear him who does not speak; the savour of the hard-shelled tortoise boiled in brass with the flesh of lamb strikes on my senses; brass is laid beneath and brass is put over it.”

Croesus was convinced by this reply, since, to quote Herodotus once more:

“ When he had sent persons to consult the different Oracles, watching the appointed day, he had recourse to the following contrivance ; having thought of what it was impossible to discover or to guess at, he cut up a tortoise and a lamb, and boiled them together, in a brazen cauldron, and put on it a cover of brass.”¹

Crœsus then, believing that he had discovered in the Oracle the one reliable adviser, hastened to put to it the fateful question. By way of showing his appreciation of Apollo’s abilities as displayed in the god’s reply to the test question, and to encourage similar accuracy in the future, his messengers carried with them gifts of which the magnificence was astonishing, even to Delphi.

The reply of Apollo appeared all that he could wish, the Oracle predicting that Crœsus, by crossing the Halys, will “ destroy a mighty kingdom.”

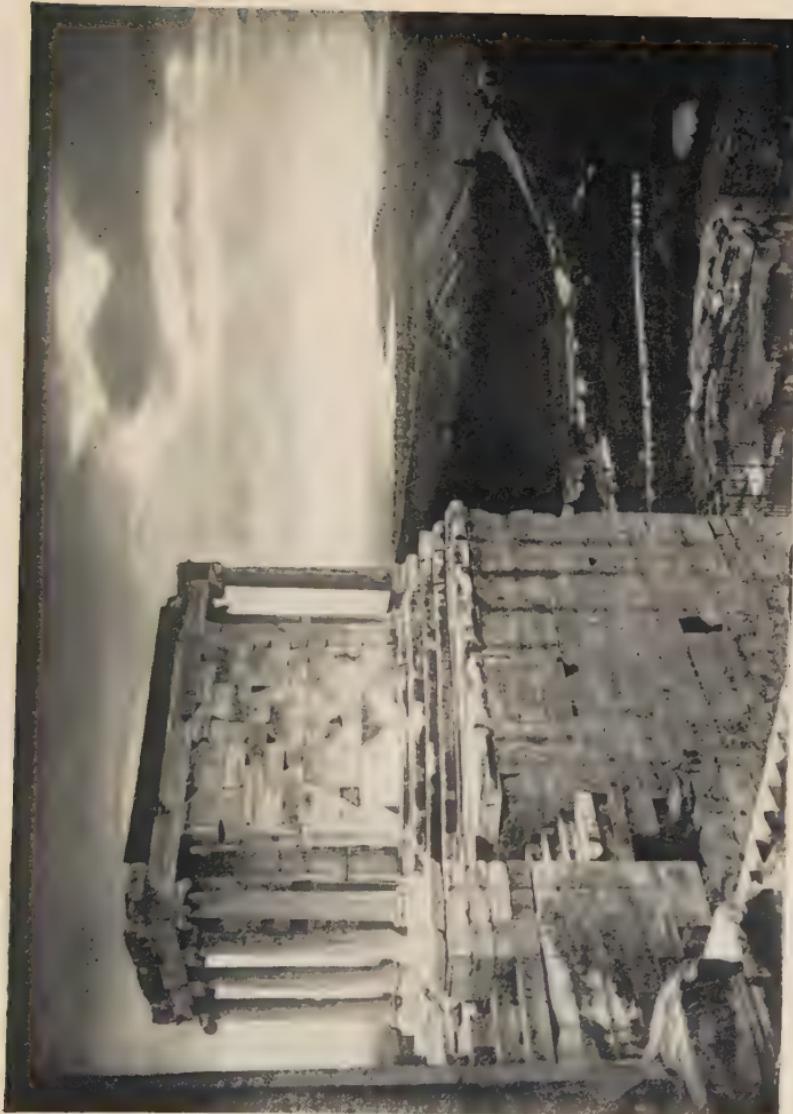
But this is not all the story. Crœsus, by virtue of his munificence, had been accorded the right to consult the Oracle before any others, and of this right he made good use. Finding, then, that the reply to his question had been to all appearances so satisfactory, he sent a second enquiry, demanding to know whether he should long enjoy the kingdom. To this the Pythia replied : “ When a mule shall become king of the Medes, then, tender-footed Lydian, flee over pebbly Hermus, nor tarry nor blush to be a coward.” Crœsus argued that in no circumstance could a mule become king of the Medes and that, since such was the case, the necessity for flight would never arise ; in short, that the kingdom had been given him and his heirs for ever.

So Crœsus made war upon the Persians, crossed the Halys, and destroyed a mighty kingdom—but the kingdom he destroyed was his own.

The entire incident is of more than usual interest to the student of Delphic history, by reason of the reply which the Oracle subsequently made to the complaints of

¹ Herod., I, 47.

TEMPLE OF ATHENA NIKE, THE ACROPOLIS, ATHENS



Crœsus. For Crœsus, having been utterly defeated by the Persians, was not slow to blame Apollo for the disaster that had overtaken him. The defeat admitted, however, Crœsus had been more fortunate than in his day a vanquished chieftain could reasonably expect would be the case, for, by judicious advice, he had gained the goodwill of his enemy. Invited, then, by Cyrus to make a request, he asked that his fetters might be sent to the god of the Greeks, to ask him if it be his custom to deceive those who deserve well of him. Cyrus granted the request, the fetters were laid at the entrance to the Temple in Delphi, and Apollo was asked how it came about that he had encouraged Crœsus to make war on the Persians, and whether these fetters were to be considered the first-fruits of the victorious war which Apollo had promised. The reply of the god, as set out in Herodotus, is intensely intriguing. Put briefly, the god replied that Apollo himself could not “ avert the decrees of fate,” ¹ that the fall of Sardis and defeat of Crœsus should have taken place three years earlier than they did, Apollo having delayed the evil hour to that extent, and that Apollo had interfered to save the life of Crœsus after his capture. That said, the god proceeded to justify the prediction of the Oracle.

“ Crœsus has no right to complain, for Apollo foretold that if he made war on the Persians, he would involve an empire in ruins, and had he desired to be more exactly informed, he should again have enquired whether his own empire or that of Cyrus was intended. . . . Further, when he last consulted the Oracle, he failed to understand the reply given to him, for Cyrus was the mule, inasmuch as he was born of parents of different nations, the mother superior but the father inferior. For she was a Mede and daughter of Astyages, King of Media, but he was a Persian, subject to the Medes.”

We have, as it were, a fleeting glimpse of the god

¹ Herod., I, 91.

seeking, but without hope, to save his subject from the inevitable.

Whatever conclusion the curious may arrive at, there will, we think, be general agreement that if the replies of the Oracle were deliberately intended to convey a double sense, they were, if they have been correctly reported, astoundingly clever. Even Crœsus, we are told, admitted the justice of the god's retort. But this we beg leave to doubt.

From first to last, however, when dealing with the Oracle, it is necessary to recollect that priestly cults of all ages have never scrupled to attribute to their deity, successes of their own mechanism. Interested parties, again, writing after the event, contrive by a hundred subtleties to reflect a little credit upon the reigning god, since, by so doing, they secure the sympathy and interest of the great uninstructed public which inevitably hankers after the miraculous. The length to which this craving will carry even moderately sensible people may be deduced from the incident of the bowmen at Mons; an admitted fiction which, to the astonishment of its author, theologians and the public alike insisted upon regarding as a statement of fact. The historian, in short, generally hesitates to deny any religious belief held in his own time, since, by so doing, he invites the hostility of a powerful religious clique, and earns the hatred of its not over-intellectual adherents. This is a fact which it is well to bear in mind when ancient writings are quoted as guaranteeing the accuracy of what is contrary to common sense.

During the invasion of Xerxes, about 480 B.C., a large force of Persian troops is said to have marched on Delphi, with a view to plundering the treasures of the Temple. The Delphians, panic-stricken, took to the hills, when Apollo declared through the mouth of his priest that he would himself undertake the defence of his sanctuary. A battle ensued, and the invaders were

defeated, the victory being due in no small measure to the destruction wrought amongst the barbarians by huge masses of rock, dislodged, no doubt, by the Delphians, from the cliffs above.

Herodotus, writing about half a century after the event, thus deals with this affair :

“ . . . but the god would not suffer them to be moved, saying that he was able to protect his own. The Delphians having received this answer, began to think of themselves . . . thus all the Delphians abandoned the city except only sixty men, and the prophet.

“ When the barbarians approached and saw the temple in the distance, the prophet, whose name was Aceratus, perceived the sacred arms which no mortal may touch, lying before the temple. . . . It is indeed a wonder that warlike instruments, self-moved, should lie before the temple, yet the prodigies which followed are worthy of admiration beyond all other portents. For when the barbarians had advanced near the Temple of Minerva Pronaæa, at that moment thunder fell on them from heaven, and two crags, broken away from Parnassus, bore them down with a loud crash, and killed many of them. . . . All these things, commingled together, a panic struck the barbarians, and the Delphians, having learnt that they were in flight, came down after them and slew a great number of them. . . . Those of the barbarians who returned, I am informed, declared that they saw many other miraculous things, and that two armed men of more than human stature followed them, slaying and pursuing them.” ¹

Thus was the reputation of Apollo re-established, and the flight of the barbarians explained.

None the less, when everything has been said in favour of a common-sense explanation of those Delphic prophecies which once astonished mankind, there remains, as we think, an irreducible minimum of the inexplicable. We do not suggest that the problem is that of Delphi alone. It concerns, indeed, every Oracle of every clime and time and equally the gift of clairvoyance which, for the moment, appears to be entangled with the new religion of Spiritualism. If, amongst the many thousands of claims made

¹ Herod., VIII, 36-38.

upon behalf of Oracles and clairvoyants, there is one single instance of the correct foretelling of some future event which could neither be guessed at nor deduced, then we have definite proof of the existence of some natural law as unknown to-day as were the possibilities of electricity in the Middle Ages. And this we believe to be the case.

The ascendancy which the Delphic Oracle acquired over its competitors was not wholly due to the greater accuracy of its forecasts. The connection between the Oracle and Apollo alone constituted a powerful factor in building up its reputation, since Apollo was held to be the cherished son and sole confidant of Zeus, and alone able to interpret to mankind the wishes of the ruler of gods and men. This claim, as more than one writer has pointed out, when it had once secured general acceptance, automatically reduced all rival claims to a second-rate importance. Again, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the religious associations of Delphi stretched far back into the uncertain past. It is always the new creed, involving an abrupt transition in ideas, that awakens suspicion and hostility; but the worship of Apollo, as we have seen, had grafted itself into an already existing stock, and itself gradually absorbed traditions and cults which originally were foreign to it. We have also such factors as the geographical position of Delphi which made it readily accessible from all parts of Greece, and not less important, the physical grandeur of the spot which at once impressed and elevated the mind of the pilgrim.

The decline of the Oracle may be traced to the undermining of public confidence, by the exposure of fraud, such as occurred in the case of Cleomenes in 493 B.C., and later, by the failure of the Oracle to rise to the height of its opportunities during the Peloponnesian War. Its end, some centuries later, was possibly hastened by the attacks of Lucian, Cicero and others.

Cleomenes, we may note, stood to gain by casting

doubt upon the reputed paternity of Demaratus, and to gain a verdict, bribed a certain Cobon, an influential Delphian, to persuade the priestess to give an oracular utterance in the sense required. This fraud was subsequently discovered, with the result that Cobon fled, and the priestess was deposed from her high office.¹ In justice to the Oracle, however, it must be remarked that the account of his paternity, given subsequently to Demaratus by his mother, was not one that any civilized court in these days would accept. None the less, right or wrong, the Oracle had shown itself accessible to outside influence.

A similar incident occurred a few years later, after Pleistoanax, King of Sparta, had been banished, on the ground that he had taken bribes to spare Attica. This ruler is said to have had influence at Delphi, and, whenever the Spartans consulted the Oracle, they were advised to recall him. This the Spartans eventually agreed to do, and Pleistoanax was reinstated as king. Subsequently, Pleistoanax was definitely accused of bribing the Pythia.² Charges of this kind, whether true or false, definitely undermined the authority of Delphi.

Of the critics who made effective attacks upon the Oracle, we may refer to Cicero, who observes that, for a long time, no Oracle has been given in the old fashion, than which nothing could be more contemptible. “ *Ut nihil possit esse contemptius* ” (de Divinatione, II, 117).

Possibly a more effective, if later, critic was Lucian, who, A.D. 120–200, made deadly play with the hexameter verse in which the replies of the Oracle had once been given. His jeers at the lack of skill evinced by the god in this form of composition have become historic. Eusebius again tells us that “ all the followers of Aristotle, the Cynics and Epicureans, and all those who were of similar views, laughed the Oracle to scorn.”

¹ Herod., VI, 66.

² Thuc., V, 16.

In considering the influence exerted by Delphi over ancient Greece, it is necessary to bear in mind that the power of the city was in inverse ratio to its authority. The Oracle was consulted by kings and rulers, and its utterances were held in awe, but, so far from being able to enforce its decrees, Delphi was itself without defence. Worse than this, it was a site of great wealth in times when wealth was a great temptation ; and there can be no doubt that the priests of Apollo kept this fact well in mind.

To them the balance of power was not so much an ideal as a necessity of their existence. One single successful raid, and the wealth of Delphi, contained as it was within the smallest area, could disappear in a night. We therefore look in vain for any policy designed to merge the antagonisms of the rival Greek States into a united country. Neither do we find any attempt to impose uniformity of religious custom.

It may possibly be argued that the Amphictyonic Council, which met from time to time at Delphi and Thermopylæ, and which was by far the most famous of several similar bodies, represented an endeavour to achieve some form of Federal Government which resulted, or might have resulted, in a certain uniformity of legislation or religious observance. There is, however, no justification for this view. We must recollect, in the first instance, that the intention to unite was entirely absent from the Greek States and, secondly, that the constitution of the Council was such that it could not efficiently have represented the States even had the desire for some form of union been present.

We may notice, in passing, that the Council was a survival of an extremely ancient body, and that the method of representation which afforded voting power to tribes rather than to cities, had long been out of date by the time the Council had achieved its greatest importance.

The great cities of Sparta and Athens were not directly represented on the Council, but voted with other Doric and Ionic cities through the Doric and Ionic representatives. In short, at no time did the Council reflect the comparative importance of the cities concerned with its decisions.

The representatives who constituted the Council were not necessarily either politicians or priests. At Delphi they were alike servants of Apollo, but at home they were statesmen, soldiers or private citizens, as the case might be. Attached to the Council was a popular Assembly, consisting of those Greeks who might be in Delphi when the Assembly met. The importance of this body, however, was local rather than national. Human nature being what it is, it is highly probable that many estimable citizens recollect with satisfaction occasions upon which they had addressed the Delphic Assembly. It all tended, in short, rather to augment the importance of Delphi, than to increase the power of Greece. The Council had no power of its own. It could impose a fine, but it could not collect it; it could tender advice, but it had no adequate reply to the State which ignored it.

The Council, indeed, until its latest days, had no political importance. It was a religious body, delivering upon topics of religion, decisions which it had no power to enforce. It has been compared to an Ecclesiastical Synod of the Middle Ages. We may notice, however, that the bond of a common religious interest was sufficiently powerful to induce the States represented upon the Council to agree not to enforce certain extreme measures of warfare against each other. There was no agreement not to make war, but there was what may perhaps be termed an attempt at mutual recognition of certain rules governing inter-State warfare.

The civil government of Greece for very many years was essentially that of distinct and independent cities.

An effective league would have been a league of cities for defensive and offensive purposes. Yet, in the Amphictyonic Council the city had no direct voice, and great and important races, such as the Doric and Ionic, could be outvoted by the far more numerous representatives of obscure tribes.

The Amphictyonic Council was, indeed, too remote from realities ever to exercise a dispassionate and unbiassed judgment, and in its later days we find without surprise that after it has been exploited by Thebes, it becomes a cloak to cover the political designs of a Philip of Macedon.

It is impossible not to find in this Council a forerunner of the League of Nations which, doubtless, in the far-distant future, will receive a similar epitaph.

Delphi, however, if it did not impose a uniform civil or religious creed upon the Greeks, was for many years well able to maintain its prestige by giving the sanction of Apollo to those laws and rites which the Greek States chose to impose upon themselves. It was the line of least resistance, as England was subsequently to find, when dealing with her colonies. This does not necessarily mean that Apollo blindly approved every law submitted to him. But, in practice, Delphi, whose influence at the best was purely religious, was no more inclined to press an objection than is England, when requested formally to sanction an Act by a Dominion legislature.

Similarly, it would be a mistake to suppose that the moral influence of Delphi was greatly in advance of its time. There is some ground for the suggestion that the Oracle, upon occasion, advised the sacrifice of boys and girls. But whether this was so or no, it is certain that many of the pronouncements of the Pythia would not commend themselves to modern judgment. To the credit side of the account, however, should be placed the extremely useful regulations which permitted Apollo, by legal fiction, to ransom slaves.

In actual fact, the slave ransomed himself, since he found the purchase price of freedom out of his own savings. And again, since the transaction was in the nature of a sale, the owner's consent as the vendor was essential to the deal. The slave whose owner was unwilling to part with him, or who could not find the price his owner demanded, had nothing to hope for from Apollo, however ill-treated he may have been.

But when all this has been said, the institution served a beneficent purpose since the sale, when it took place, was treated as a purchase by Apollo. The slave thus exchanged a real master for a fictitious one, and, still having a master, a god at that, he was safe from seizure or molestation by his late owner, or any other party. The ransomed slave, in short, became not a defenceless freeman, but a slave without duties.

In the creation of heroes, as distinct from matters of religious ritual, the Oracle exercised an acknowledged authority. Plato tells us :

“ For Apollo of Delphi will remain the most important, the noblest and the chiefest acts of legislation . . . the erection of temples and the appointment of sacrifices and other ceremonies in honour of gods and demi-gods and heroes.”

“ It seems strange,” writes Mr. Dempsey, “ that states which so passionately loved local autonomy, should have tolerated what seemed an infringement of their own rights. We may explain all this, however, by parallelism with the canonization of saints in the Roman Catholic Church. Just as only those are accepted as saints whom the Church has authoritatively declared such, so, too, in ancient Greece, those alone could receive honours whom the Oracle had raised to the heroic dignity.”

Unfortunately for the reputation of the Oracle, it abused its powers in its decadence, and towards the end we find it bestowing heroic honours upon athletes, and not necessarily upon the greatest of them. The Oracle had become democratic—other great institutions have met a similar fate.

In closing this necessarily imperfect sketch of the most famous of all the Oracles, we may notice that Delphi is at the zenith of its fame in the seventh century B.C., that its prestige begins to wane early in the fifth century B.C., and that in succeeding centuries its influence, now only religious, diminishes with increasing rapidity. Now and again, the flame would flicker into momentary brightness, but the fires of belief were growing cold. It was left for Christianity, by decree of Theodosius, finally to extinguish the Oracle in A.D. 390.

But if we may accept the reply which Apollo is said to have addressed to Julian in A.D. 361, the god had already pronounced his own fate.

“Tell the king,” said the Pythia, “to earth is fallen the deft-wrought dwelling, no longer hath Phœbus shelter, or prophetic laurel, or speaking fountain; yea, the speaking water is quenched.”

CHAPTER XIII

MODERN DELPHI

“Delphi is one of the most impressive sites in Greece.”—J. C. STOBART.

FROM Athens to Delphi the tourist has the choice of two routes. The shorter, and possibly more easy, journey is to take the steamer through the Corinth Canal, a matter of eight hours or so, to the port of Itea on the northern shore of the Gulf of Corinth. At Itea, a car can be readily secured, and a comparatively short run brings the visitor to the inn at Delphi. This route has the advantage that it affords a view of the Corinth Canal. The scenery on leaving the western end of the Canal is also well worth seeing.

The alternative route, which I myself took, is by train to Bralo, and thence by car over the mountains.

At Bralo station, called Kytinion, the car should be waiting, if proper arrangements have been made in advance, and now commences a drive which I can assure the reader he will never forget.

After crossing and recrossing the line, the road runs to the west and soon plunges into the mountains. There follows a zig-zag climb, which is calculated to cause the nervous traveller more than a little anxiety. The view over the side of the car, of the road twisting to and fro below one, is really astonishing. These drivers, however, are experts. My car was sent to Bralo to meet me from the inn at Delphi, and the driver obviously knew every inch of the road. I soon learned to appreciate this

fact, since every inch was, at times, of importance. On one stretch of the road, and with a perpendicular rock on our right and a sheer drop of hundreds of feet on our left, we came suddenly upon a prodigious boulder which had tumbled from the cliff above, and had rolled itself neatly into the middle of the road. It had obviously been there for some little time, and our driver apparently knew all about it, as he carefully took the left-hand side of this obstruction, as being possibly the wider road by two or three inches, and successfully passed between the boulder and the edge of the cliff. No doubt he had frequently done this before, and probably the feat was safe enough, but I am free to confess that, having once looked over the edge of the car to see how much road there was to spare, I hastily withdrew my head and thereafter took no further interest in the matter until we were safely in the middle of the road once more. In any other country, except perhaps Spain, that boulder would have been hauled out of the way by a team of horses, but the Greeks never waste their energy, and, since it is just possible for a car to get round it, it is quite probably still there.

As a matter of fact, however, the present road from Bralo to Itea was made by the Allies during the Great War, and, for Greece, is a very good one. Previously, there had existed a carriage road which, although too narrow for the purposes of the Allies, was quite adequate for the very limited traffic which in normal times passes from Bralo to Itea. This mountain road must have presented a very busy scene when the Allies were shipping stores to Itea and sending them in long trains of motor lorries by this road to Bralo and the railway *en route* to Serbia.

The distance from Bralo to Kastri is seventy kilometres, and takes by car from one and a half to two hours. Before the Allies had constructed the existing road,



VIEW FROM THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO, DELPHI
SHOWING PART OF EXCAVATED AREA IN THE FOREGROUND

however, the journey was considerably more arduous. The old track was narrower and far rougher, so that motor traffic, even had motors been available, would have been impossible. The route was covered in those days on horseback or in carriages drawn each by four horses, and the traveller who reached Kastri in under the eight hours had done something to boast about.

Much might be written about Parnassus, which towers above us on the left. On the right-hand, we have the lofty range of Korax, separated from Parnassus only by the Valley of Amphissa, along which we pass. It is interesting that the highest peaks of Korax, Khiona and Vardousi, are higher by several hundred feet than Parnassus itself, of which the highest summit is between 8,000 and 8,200 feet. Parnassus, however, is far more renowned, and I think with reason. If that expressive French term "*Sournoise*" may be applied to a mountain, I would attach it to Parnassus.

All this region is, of course, volcanic. The great convulsions which once obliterated familiar landmarks in a night are now, fortunately, a thing of the past. But even to-day occasional tremors remind the tourist of the origin of the great fissures and chasms round which this road winds a tortuous course.

The town of Salona, where the driver probably leaves the car to purchase a few necessities for his household at Kastri, is officially called Amphissa, after the ancient city which once stood on the same site.

There is not very much to see in Salona, and the traveller who leaves the car to wander through the place, will not gain very much beyond a change of occupation. Above Salona may be seen the ruins of a mediæval castle, which was built by the Frankish counts of Salona upon the walls of the ancient acropolis of Amphissa, or possibly of the ancient town itself. The ancient Amphissians are chiefly interesting historically as the object of that

violent denunciation by Æschines, on the ground of having covered the sacred plain of Krissa with cattle and growing crops. The Delphians, fired with rage, kindled the war of 339 B.C., and so brought Philip of Macedon into Greece—ostensibly to punish the Amphissians—but ultimately to conquer Greece. All this, however, does not make these dreary ruins any the more interesting to look upon.

The latter part of the drive to Kastri, through forests of olive trees, affords a pleasant change from the grand, if gloomy, mountain scenery of Parnassus and Korax. Grecian olives are, of course, world-famous, but the most famous of Greek olives are those cultivated in the vicinity of Delphi. Kastri stands high up on the slope of Parnassus, and, looking down into the valley or along the winding road leading through the gorge, the traveller sees with astonishment those thousands of olive trees. Indeed, in March or April it is always possible to meet the peasant returning from olive gathering. Two or three mules carrying each two large baskets filled with black olives are followed by the peasant and his wife and possibly two small boys making a great deal of noise. Behind this train follow one or two goats and possibly a sheep or two.

The peasants here mostly own their own trees. Olive trees bear only once in two years, and in alternate years the peasant proprietor hires himself out to assist a man whose trees are bearing, or to work in a farm or vineyard. The average holding is about 100 trees.

The life is unquestionably a hard one, but the peasant is a simple soul, as yet unspoiled by a taste for cheap fiction and American films. He grows his own wine, and, to a large extent, makes his own clothes. He owns a few sheep which appear to regard him almost with affection, and which he kills and eats as occasion requires. Unfortunately, he cannot grow enough corn to last him

through the year, as the land will not permit of it. However, he usually has olives or wine with which to pay for the corn he needs.

In this country, the olive is generally associated with large bottles of oil, but round about Delphi very little oil is made ; I was told not more than 15 per cent of the total harvest was so used. The olive again is generally eaten green in England. Greek olives, however, are gathered black, that is, when fully ripe, and, to express a personal preference, they gain immensely in taste from this fact. The crop is usually shipped to America, where olives are more appreciated than in this country.

Delphi is visited, of course, because it is the site of the Temple of Apollo, and I should be the last to deny the extreme interest attaching to the work of the French School upon this site, but, none the less for that, I imagine the final impression of the traveller will be one of a great gorge and a vast valley filled with olive trees.

The modern village of Kastri stands about five minutes' walk from the ancient village of the same name, and the site of the Delphic ruins. There is nothing of interest in Kastri beyond a clean and well-managed little inn which, in Greece, may perhaps be said to be of interest by reason of its rarity.

For what we know of ancient Delphi, we are indebted to the French. Others had visited the site and had even undertaken excavations on a small scale. But it was left to the French to grapple seriously with the manifold problems which in modern times the site presented to the archæologist. As long ago as 1810, a Danish archæologist had expressed himself strongly : " The wretched little village of Kastri in many ways renders it difficult to survey the whole site, and to be able to get a satisfactory plan of Delphi one would have to begin by pulling down many of its huts."

In 1840, Delphi was visited by the famous German

scholar, Ottfried Müller, who copied certain inscriptions. His visit, in other times might well have given rise to a legend. Müller denied that Apollo had ever been a sun-god, but the god took his revenge and Müller died of sunstroke.

French interest in the site was aroused in 1861, when Foucart and Wescher commenced their excavations. This effort came to an end and work was not resumed until 1880, when the French scholar, Haussoullier, again took up the task. Foucart became Director of the French School at Athens and, as such, applied to the French Government for assistance to continue the excavations. This was fortunately forthcoming, and an agreement was reached between the French and Greek Governments, permitting the excavators to remove the village of Kastri, and to excavate upon terms which still regulate the relationship between the foreign archæological schools and the Greeks. Under this agreement, all finds remain the property of the Greek Government, but the excavators may remove duplicates of inferior value, and control the manufacture and sale of casts. As the foreign schools defray the expenses and do the work, and their discoveries remain the property of the Greeks, the arrangement from the Greek point of view would seem a fairly reasonable one.

However, a curious situation now arose. A new Greek Government, desirous of importing currants into France, attempted to use the excavations at Delphi as a lever. The French Government, holding its own view about currants, failed to reach an agreement, and the French archæologists were accordingly turned out of Delphi. The Greeks now turned to the Germans, but the Germans, to their credit, declined to take advantage of the situation. There followed a typically American offer. The temptation to dig his fingers into something more ancient than the United States, is one that no American millionaire

can withstand. The Americans offered to pay the cost of expropriating the inhabitants of Kastri, as well as the entire cost of the excavations, but, for some reason, it was this time the Greek Government who declined the proposal.

Finally, in 1891, the French Government voted half a million francs, a sum which later grants increased to the round million, and an agreement was reached under which the Greek Government undertook to expropriate the unfortunate Kastriotes and the French to do everything else. The work thus commenced, was carried on with few interruptions until the outbreak of war in 1914.

When viewing the ruins of the Temple, or the "finds" collected in the museum adjoining the site, the traveller should bear in mind that nowhere does he see anything that was native to Delphi. Delphi was the great storehouse for gifts to Apollo. Even the Temple itself was in the nature of a gift, since the cost of it was defrayed from contributions raised throughout Hellas. The art of Delphi has been described as "an expression of the emulation of the Greek States." Certainly, it represented conflicting ambitions and diverse sentiments. Very frequently, however, the City or State employed a Delphic artist, so that the same artist can be shown to have executed work for States of widely dissimilar culture. Delphic sculpture, therefore, represents neither the culture of the donor, nor the gradual growth of local art.

It is, in a sense, unfortunate, that the visitor sees Delphi most generally as he walks *from* Kastri. To get the real atmosphere of the place the approach should be made from the east. The road to-day is higher than the ancient road followed by pilgrims, but its course is much the same. Following this road in the direction of Kastri, the traveller encounters the first trace of Delphi in the town cemetery, with monuments from the sixth century B.C. down to Roman times. Behind the graves

is a picturesque Temenos, dedicated to Athena Pronaia—the Athena who dwells before the temple. Here are the foundations of the four temples mentioned by Pausanias. This spot is now fortunately preserved, but it once served as a convenient quarry for anyone in search of marble. In ancient times, the road continued past the gymnasium where athletes trained for the Pythian games. This was once an open space with a level-sanded floor surrounded by colonnades, but to-day one can see little more than traces of the great open-air swimming bath.

Above the Gymnasium may be found the spring of Castalia, patronized in the days of Apollo by priestess and pilgrim alike. As the pilgrim left the spring, he came suddenly face to face with the sanctuary and town of Delphi.

Pausanias thus describes the view: “The town of Delphi lies on a steep slope; the same is the case with the sanctuary of Apollo, which is of considerable size, and forms the highest part of the town.” It is difficult to form any idea of the appearance of Delphi in historic times. Calculations based on the lists of slaves liberated each year show that Delphi in the second century B.C. had a population of about 10,000. While, however, the mansions of the great would be more imposing than any house with which we are familiar, the great mass of people was probably represented by very little in the way of brickwork.

The Temenos itself, surrounded on all sides by walls, covered 20,000 square metres. The chief entrance at the south-east corner faced a large paved area, bounded on the north-east by a colonnade. From this point, the pilgrim ascended by five steps to a gate, all traces of which have long since disappeared. On the third step before the gate, stood two great basins of holy water, in which the pilgrims doubtless dipped their fingers. “When we enter sanctuaries, we sprinkle ourselves with

water to cleanse ourselves from guilt," says Hippocrates —there is, of course, nothing new under the sun. From the gate, the Sacred Way wound S-shaped between votive groups and treasuries, upwards to the temple. The Sacred Way and the Treasury of the Athenians constitute to-day probably the two best preserved relics of the ancient site. The former, however, dates partly from Domitian's time, and partly from the time of the Antonines, the material for its construction having been taken from older buildings, so that it goes back no farther than Delphi's declining days; the latter has been ably restored by the French architect Replat.

Of the Temple, little beyond the foundations now remains to us. These, however, suffice to show the great size of this sanctuary. The north-west corner of the Temenos was occupied by the theatre, which is still in a fair state of preservation. Pausanias describes the theatre as a notable sight. It had thirty-three rows of seats, divided by flights of steps into seven sections. The flagged orchestra and stage buildings date from Roman times. Northwards of the theatre, and outside the Temenos, we find the stadium which seated 7,000 spectators. The length of the course is 178 metres, corresponding to 600 Delphian feet, which was the Delphic "stadion." The twelve tiers of seats cut into the rock on the north side still remain; the six tiers of the south side, and the semi-circular western end, however, were built up and have now disappeared.

It is inevitable that the visitor to Delphi, while following the Sacred Way between broken and apparently chaotic masses of stone, will desire to conjure up some vision of what the scene must have been when the prestige of Delphi was admitted throughout Greece. But this is not easily done. We know that the site was literally crowded with costly and magnificent statues, but authorities cannot agree where many of the most notable were

placed ; and, in any event, we know that there was no attempt to secure an effective display of these wonders. The work of art was presented to Apollo and remained in Delphi merely as something to the credit of the donor.

Many of the most notable finds are now collected in the museum erected, between Delphi and Kastri, by a Greek gentleman of the name of Syngros. Doubtless a museum was necessary, and it is pleasant to find the Greeks contributing to the work of preserving their own historic relics. But the visitor to the site will inevitably wish that the museum were a little less hideous, or that its cheapness were more effectively hidden.

In considering the finds at Delphi, it is necessary to bear in mind that many are of far greater antiquity than others. We find, for instance, many Mycenaean sherds and terra-cottas which were discovered in the earth under the eastern side of the temple. It is not without interest that these discoveries were made when the high altar of Apollo was rebuilt in the fifth century B.C., and that from the ashes and pieces of bone found in the same place, they themselves mark the site of a more ancient altar, possibly the earliest erected in Delphi. These terra-cottas represent women, and, for the most part, were probably made on the spot and sold to pilgrims for use as offerings. At least one of them, however, is considered to represent Ge, the Earth-goddess and first occupant of the Oracle, and as such marks one of the earliest attempts to give human shape to an object of worship, a transition from the worship of a stone to that of a representation carved upon it. The stirrup vases found at Delphi were the perfume jars of the period. These were attractively shaped and closed by a stopped pipe which made it easier to tilt out the liquid. We have the best of proof that these vases were used for perfumes, since, when one was opened on discovery, the scent was still sufficiently strong to be appreciated,

although, naturally, it vanished in a moment. This perfume must have been 3,500 years old, or, to bring it home, let us say that it was made 2,600 odd years before William the Conqueror reached England.

While this work cannot pretend to catalogue the finds at Delphi, the following notes upon some of the best known exhibits in the museum will, perhaps, be of interest to the visitor.

The Naxian Sphinx is held to have been executed in Naxos. Mr. Frederik Poulsen holds the view that its use was probably decorative only. It stood "high over the road as a mark or vigorous bit of decorative sculpture like the lion of St. Mark at Venice." It was executed in colours which were diversified to give emphasis to eyes, lips, hair and feathers, but which would possibly lose some of their brilliance from the rain and the sun. The three dancing girls grouped around a support, are held to represent fourth-century sculpture, and to be the work of an Attic artist of the circle of Praxiteles. The draperies caught by the wind, clothe, but do not conceal, these delightful female figures. The column on which these dancers stood was of Parian marble, and consisted of a base, five drums of equal height, and a capital, and was 8.66 metres in height. It is believed to have stood on the north side of the Sacred Way in front of the Syracusan votive group, and to have been visible far over the Temenos.

The bronze statue of a charioteer, which is, perhaps, the most famous of the statues discovered at Delphi, was found north of the temple where a supporting wall had been erected to hold back the pieces of cliff loosened by earthquakes. It was a landslide that contributed to the destruction of the temple in 373 B.C., and the new wall designed to prevent the repetition of that catastrophe was erected over, amongst other débris, the statue of the charioteer. This was, no doubt, accidental, since bronze

was much valued at the time. The accident, however, was extremely fortunate, since, had the statue been discovered and re-erected, it would probably have shared the fate of many others, and vanished during the latter vicissitudes of the site. The charioteer was discovered in 1896 in two pieces, and at the same time were found other portions of the group to which it belonged, parts of the chariot, two hind-legs of horses, a horse's tail and hoof, remains of reins and the arm of a child. The entire group is assumed to have been 3·60 metres broad. The name of the donor is disputed, since the name of Polyzalos which appears upon one of the basic blocks, is engraved over an erased inscription. It is, however, suggested that the actual donor was Gelon,¹ whose widow Polyzalos married. The group is believed to have stood on a terrace wall above the temple, somewhere about 470 B.C. It would, however, have been buried when Pausanias visited Delphi in the second century A.D.

It is not without interest that this statue furnishes us with many precise details of a charioteer's dress, the upper part of the coat being

“ fastened not only by the belt, but also by braces, which pass over the shoulders and under the armpits and meet and cross at the back. These bands keep the garment together, and keep the material from being blown about when the chariot is travelling rapidly.”²

In every detail, however, the work is of exceptional merit. I myself noticed particularly the effect of the eyes, of which the retina is inlaid with a white enamel-like substance, the pupils consisting of two concentric onyx-rings of different colour. The charioteer is undoubtedly a masterpiece, but it is not known who executed this famous work.

The Treasury of the Athenians which attracts immediate attention, owing to the fact that it has been

¹ “Tyrant” of Syracuse. ² “Delphi,” Frederik Poulsen.

reconstructed, was erected after the battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. The following description of the site after two of the houses of old Kastri had been removed, sufficiently indicates the prodigious difficulties with which the archæologist is called upon to grapple.

"The site presented a horrid picture of confusion, and the circumstances of the find gave practically no information as to the position of blocks or metopes. Everything conspired to make the picture a motley one: the site had been constantly built over for ages, and stone carried off to be used here and there. Some of the metope slabs were used as tombstones for Christian graves of the sixth century A.D. Moreover, the building is on a slope. Whatever did not fall heavily to the ground inside the foundations, rolled down, and earthquakes increased the speed and distance. Even the foundations were split by earthquakes, walls were raised and bulged out, though the architect endeavoured to fasten the stones with strong iron clamps. As a result of earthquake, the light metope slabs took flight through the air, like leaves on an autumn day, and found rest down in ruin-heaps from other buildings in the southern part of the Temenos. Nevertheless most of the material was there, and it was determined to re-erect the building."

To the French architect, Replat, belongs the chief credit for the reconstruction which took into account such factors as the gradually decreasing thickness of the walls from the ground upwards, the difference in thickness between one wall and another, the method by which, as originally erected, one stone was clamped to another, and finally the inscriptions which are frequently continued from one block to another. All these factors, properly utilized, afforded clues in the re-erection of the Treasury as we now see it.

The Temple of Apollo, of which the foundations alone remain to us, was the sixth to be erected upon this site. Such information as we have regarding the earlier temples is scanty and unreliable. We know, however, that the fourth temple was burnt down in 548 B.C., and that the fifth temple was destroyed about 373 B.C., although whether its destruction was due to an earthquake, or,

as has been suggested, to the undermining of its foundation by a spring, is uncertain.

The erection of the sixth temple was first publicly mooted at a Peace Conference in Sparta in 371 B.C. It speaks volumes for the prestige of Delphi that, no sooner had the destruction of the last temple and the erection of a new one been publicly announced, than contributions commenced to flow in, not only from all parts of Hellas, but even from Egypt, Sicily and the Crimea.

The final cost of the temple has been variously estimated at between £120,000 and £150,000. Too much importance, however, should not be attached to such figures, since an attempt to translate the value of the talent into sterling can never be entirely successful. We learn, for instance, that the monthly salary of one of the architects was sixty drachmæ which, at the present rate of exchange, is worth, let us say, 3s. Even with the drachmæ at par, it would be but a little over £2. We may be satisfied, however, that the purchasing power of money in the time of which we write gave it a value which cannot be translated, with mathematical precision, into modern coinage.

No doubt the greater sum was forthcoming, but we cannot say how much of that amount was used for other purposes, such as the replacement of the treasures destroyed by the Phocians, and the re-erection of other buildings within Delphi. It was not until 305 B.C. that the temple was officially declared to be finished.

The nature of the contracts between the temple authorities and the contractors are known to us, and run on lines with which we are all familiar, down to the inclusion of a time clause, and the imposition of fines for non-delivery of material. Limestone from a quarry between Corinth and Sicyon was principally employed, the stone being worked rather larger than was required, and shaped on the spot. The blocks were transported via the harbour of Lechæum and Cirrha, whence they were dragged up to



Typical GREEK House AT ARTA

Delphi. Wood for the doors and lattices came from Sicyon and Macedon.

That so little remains to us of the glories of the completed edifice, must be ascribed to the weakening of Greece, and to the temptation to plunder to which it gave rise. Nero, as we should expect to be the case, was principally guilty in the latter respect, for it would appear that he not merely impoverished the temple by distributing its domains amongst his soldiers, but himself carried off 500 of its statues. Later Cæsars, however, principally Domitian, Trajan and Hadrian, showed themselves friendly to Delphi, but already much of the glory of the temple had departed. Finally, in A.D. 390, Theodosius the Great closed the temple, which his successor, Arcadius, and his friends smashed to fragments as a vindication of the Christian religion.

Needless to say, the foundations of the temple have been the object of profound examination by the greatest archæologists of modern times.

Against the south wall within the temple was found a quadrangular building of limestone with a flat wooden ceiling. It is said by some archæologists that this small space contained a gilt statue of Apollo, and that a staircase led from it to a vault which is claimed by Courby and others to have been the shrine of the prophetic tripod. But this opinion is not shared by the archæologists of the French School, of which the Director writes to me:—
“Il est impossible, dans l'état actuel des découvertes de pouvoir préciser où se trouvait le trépied prophétique.” This statement, coming from such a source, must be considered final. The work of the French School, however, although suspended when I visited Delphi, is to be resumed, and we have not yet learned all that there is to know of a spot which once was without a rival in the civilized world.

CHAPTER XIV

SALONICA

“ All these things will be judged by Time.”—ARISTOTLE.

NO town in Greece shows quite the same promise as Salonica. The town consists virtually, of two parts, the upper or Turkish city and the lower or Greek area which was almost totally destroyed by fire in 1917. At the time of the fire the city had a population of about 220,000 inhabitants. I cannot say precisely what the population may be to-day, but an estimate of 500,000 persons would probably be within the mark. Since 1920, over 1,500 new buildings have been erected under the new regulations and are of fire-proof construction. The material used is, for the most part, reinforced concrete with a brick shell finished in stucco. In short, during the past few years Salonica has progressed much more in the fashion of a Canadian city than a Greek one.

The prosperity of Salonica is due in no small measure to the vast hinterland to which it is the only gateway. The Great War left Jugo-Slavia with a port or so upon the Adriatic, but without access to the sea in the east. In order to surmount the latter difficulty, it was arranged that Jugo-Slavia should receive a free customs zone within Salonica, which port, therefore, virtually does duty for two different countries. This arrangement, at its best, was highly unsatisfactory to all concerned, and when a few years later Italy deprived Jugo-Slavia of her best ports in the Adriatic, the situation at Salonica was

rendered acute. Communication between Salonica and Jugo-Slavia is maintained by the Ghevigli-Salonica Railway, which belongs to a French Company. As at present arranged, Jugo-Slavian goods are put into wagons and sealed by the Greek and Jugo-Slavian authorities and on reaching Salonica they are transferred to steamers without interference from the Greek customs. The Serbs, however, are not content with this arrangement, but demand that the line shall be placed under the Jugo-Slavian Railway and Custom House officials. The Jugo-Slavian authorities, indeed, secured from the French Railway Company the option to purchase their shares, an arrangement with which Greece interfered. It is difficult to see how Greece could accede to a demand of this nature, which is tantamount to asking her to forego her sovereign rights over a railway within her own territory. It is clear that were this point conceded, there would be nothing to prevent the Serbs, were they so inclined, from importing goods through Salonica free of all customs duty, and subsequently selling them in Greek Macedonia. It is the policy of the French Government to secure a "bloc" or coalition of the Balkan States, and we may take it that no step which would bring about a satisfactory arrangement between Greece and Jugo-Slavia would be indifferent to her. It is, however, extremely difficult to see how an absurd arrangement such as that sanctioned by the Great Powers in the case of Salonica can ever be worked without friction. The Powers that made Jugo-Slavia territorially so great a country, should have had sufficient imagination to secure for her a port of her own upon the *Ægean*. To ask Greece to make good at the expense of her sovereign rights a blunder for which she was in no way responsible—for whatever intrigue there may have been, the ultimate decision did not rest with Greece—is a distinctly unfair request.

To return to Salonica itself, we may notice that the old Turkish quarter has now lost its nationality as a result of the arrangements between Turkey and Greece under which each country regained its own nationals. In many cases the Greeks now settled in the Turkish city are returned refugees, but refugees and original Greeks alike have combined to destroy the Turkish minarets which only a few years ago indicated the mosques.

On the lower ground, lying between the Turkish city and the sea front, stood the old Greek town of Salonica which was practically destroyed in 1917. At the time of the fire, the disaster appeared as great as it well could be, but it can scarcely be doubted that in reality the destruction of the old Greek city was one of the most fortunate events in the history of the port.

It was this old Greek town, a place of dirt and mud and every kind of building, in which it was not unusual to find a hole 5 foot deep in the middle of the road, that was for some time the headquarters of the English and French armies operating against the Bulgarians. This occupation of a leading port in a country with which we were neither at war nor upon friendly terms, was not the least curious episode of the war. As everybody is aware, the government of King Constantine resorted to every measure to persuade the British and French forces to go away, and there was no doubt a considerable section of the population at Salonica which shared the views of the then Greek Government. The Greek landlords, amusement contractors and *café* owners, however, must have made fortunes from the occupation, and it is highly improbable that the purely political side of the question had any real interest for them. The English have never been particularly successful in their negotiations with the Greeks, and when the military authorities were called upon to deal with Levantine proprietors of jerry-built houses, they made themselves liable for rents

utterly undreamed of prior to that time and which, in fact, the Greeks themselves never expected to receive. It was not an unusual thing for a small villa to be let furnished at a *monthly* rental equivalent to twelve times the *annual* rent paid by the proprietor. I believe it is a fact that the army authorities paid £8,000 or £9,000 per annum for the use of a hospital upon which they had to spend another £9,000 or £10,000 before it was safe to send soldiers into it. In the same way the cafés earned in one month more than they had previously taken in three or four years.

But the occupation was unsatisfactory to everybody, and there was constant friction between the English and French commanders on the one side and the Greek officials on the other. I mention this fact because it is one which it is necessary to remember even to-day when a Greek is giving his account of the Great Fire. He will admit that the English troops did everything they could to save property and to put a stop to the conflagration, but he will assert without hesitation either that the French were responsible for the fire in the first instance or that they cut off the water supply until it was too late to save the city from destruction. However, as I have suggested, too much importance should not be attached to statements of this kind.

Mr. H. Collinson Owen, who was present in Salonica at the time, paints a vivid picture of the catastrophe.

"The evacuation of each street came in a panic rush as its inhabitants realized that their homes also were doomed. This attitude of only believing at the very last moment that there was any danger for their own homes or business establishments, marked the whole progress of the fire until the moment when it had reached the edge of the sea and was blazing along nearly a mile of front. The inhabitants of every separate line or section of streets were convinced that the conflagration was going to pass them by. A quarter of an hour later they were fleeing for their lives, bearing all sorts of absurd household goods snatched

up in panic moments . . . jewellers and others did not appear to try and save their stocks until a late hour. At 10 o'clock that night, people in hotels on the water front did not think their sleeping arrangements would be disturbed—and were bolting with their hand luggage at 11 o'clock. . . . It was, in a vague way, nobody's business—until suddenly, like a thunder-clap, it became apparent that it was everybody's business. . . . Allied patrols now came up, French, Italian and the rest, and here and there officers were attempting to organize or direct fire fighting operations. But everything was against them—the crowds, the narrow jammed streets, the lack of everything useful, and above all the fire, which by now might have got the better of the combined resources of London and New York. A little dynamite was tried, but the flames leaped laughingly over any breaches made. . . . The hot wind blowing behind created a huge forced draught. Leaping ahead of the actual flames was a cloud of incandescent air, bearing great flakes of fire. . . . This played on buildings ahead, prepared them nicely for the burning, and a falling flake of fire did the rest. . . . We saw that the long wooden roof of the bazaar, which led from the Rue Egnatia down Venizelos Street towards the water front, had caught fire. It was the beginning of the end of the commercial quarter . . . merchants were throwing their stocks out on the pavements and then frantically appealing for transport to remove them. There were shrieks and cries, the crash of falling buildings, the sound of splintering glass . . . and now, louder than ever, the unvarying roar of the fire."

Salonica never recovered whilst in the occupation of the Allies, but during the past few years the area swept by the fire has been the scene of intensified building. Money from England, France, Germany and Italy has poured into the town and the new buildings compare favourably with those of many great continental cities. The famous restaurant of Floca's, destroyed by the fire, had its lower rooms reconstructed and is due to be rebuilt in its entirety. No one familiar with the city as it was before 1917, however, would recognize it to-day. In the place of the narrow lane of quaint wooden huts which once was Venizelos Street, there is now a 50 foot roadway, with 15 feet wide pavements, planted with trees and lined with fine buildings in which the hum of commercial

life continues far into the evening. Salonica, however, is far from completed, and I do not doubt that much money will still be invested there with great advantage to the investor.

Except from the commercial point of view, Salonica has little to offer to the visitor. It is picturesquely situated and some pleasant excursions can be made into the hills round about, but from the point of view of the sightseer there is nothing in the city which justifies a break in one's journey.

CHAPTER XV

MOUNT ATHOS

“ . . . This strange promontory, in its beauty surpassing all description, in its history unique both for early progress and for subsequent unchangeableness, in its daily life a faithful mirror of long-past centuries.”—MAHAFFY.

THE monasteries of Mount Athos have been variously described. One writer refers to them as “the very centre of the Eastern Church, the proud Christian fortress that has never yet yielded to the infidel . . . the impregnable fortress of the Christian faith.” Another writer tells us they are “ mediæval castles inhabited by mediæval men ” and “ the strangest and most perfect relic now extant of mediæval superstition.” No doubt much depends upon the angle from which these matters are regarded.

Upon one point, however, all travellers agree, that no religious institution could be placed in a fitter setting. Isolated far out upon the peninsula, often perched upon apparently inaccessible rocks, remote and beautiful, these monasteries are perfectly situated for one who would retreat from the temptations of the world. And it must be admitted, whatever drawback the fact may possess, that the rules of the monastery give every assistance to such a person. No woman may place foot upon the Holy Mountain and, at least in theory, no female animal of any sort is permitted upon the peninsula. Life is monotonous and respectably dull.

There have been critical years in the past of Mount

Athos. More than once in their long history the very existence of the monasteries has been threatened, by attack from without or by heresy within. To-day more subtle dangers menace the peninsula. No longer are religious orders a powerful force in the State, and the fate which is now overtaking Meteora must eventually lay waste the Athos monasteries.¹ But that day is not yet.

The monks at Athos are of the Order of St. Basil. This is, of course, usually the case in Greece. There is, however, this difference between the Athos communities and those elsewhere in Greece that the former do not abate any of the severities of their rule. They fast constantly, and pass eight hours of the day in prayer. The exclusion of female animals is naturally a serious source of embarrassment and expense. Butter is very rare and eggs are necessarily imported.

The history of this great monastic community dates back to the ninth century, when the rocks of Athos attracted hermits who fled before the Mohammedan invasion of Egypt and Syria. For two centuries the peninsula was a monastic centre of the highest importance. It formed, indeed, a kind of monastic republic. Surrounded upon three sides by the sea and upon the fourth joined only by a narrow isthmus to the mainland, no site could have been better suited to the purposes of defence, and the monasteries could safely defy the turbulent times of the Middle Ages.

While we may date the monastic orders of Athos collectively from the ninth century, however, we know that at a much earlier date hermits were living their precarious lives amidst the rocks and forests of the peninsula, and that there was a community of monks upon Athos for some time before the existing monasteries were built.

¹ It is perhaps significant that the lands of the Rumanian monastery have, with the consent of the League of Nations, been handed over to the refugees from Asia Minor.

By 963 St. Athanasius, one of the most celebrated of the Athos monks, had laid the foundation of the first great monastery, Lavra.

Athanasius the Athonite came of a rich family in Trebizond and was educated in Constantinople where, in the course of time, he became the confessor of the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas. Desiring to lead a more austere life than was possible in the eastern capital, he retired to Athos where he remained unrecognized until 960, about which time Nicephorus Phocas decided to erect the great Lavra monastery, a task in which he invited the co-operation of Athanasius.

The regulations first enforced at Athos have since been closely adhered to. Monks were not permitted to possess property and were under the absolute authority of the abbot, who held his post for life.

The erection of the monastery coincided with the disappearance of the hermits, of whom only five, chosen for their high character, were permitted to remain upon the peninsula. The ordered routine of a highly disciplined body had, indeed, but little sympathy with the wild and often animal-like existence led by these half-crazy zealots.

The association of Nicephorus Phocas with the monastery in its early days was of considerable importance, inasmuch as he had both the power and the will to make this religious body virtually independent of outside control.

From the building of Lavra, foundations followed one another in rapid succession, and the monasteries of Iveron, Vatopedi, Xeropotamou, Esphigmenou, Dochiariou, Hagios Paulos and others rose up in different parts of the Holy Mountain between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, the last of the monasteries to be founded being Stavroniketa in 1541. A number of smaller houses and simple hermitages dependent upon the greater monasteries also made their appearance, and in the course of time

the monasteries, steadily increasing in numbers and wealth, became the ground landlords of the entire peninsula.

The names of most of the monasteries are those of their founders, either of the monk or hermit who proposed to erect the building or of the potentate whose material support permitted the scheme to be carried out.

Although the geographical situation of the monasteries was to some extent a guarantee against external dangers, they suffered from time to time from internal dissensions. Mr. Hasluck, whose authoritative work on the monasteries will for long remain without a rival, remarks that on Athos, as in the West, frequent periods of acknowledged decadence and laxity were followed by attempts at reform.

“ Most of the abuses are traceable to the same relaxation in discipline which later brought about the Idiorrhythmic system and they result regularly in the impoverishment of the foundations. The remedy is sought, not in the formation of a stricter Rule, but by a stricter application of existing laws.”

The isolated position of the peninsula, however, could not suffice to shield the monks from every storm that has swept over Europe, and in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we find Mount Athos incorporated in the kingdom of Salonica, and its Orthodox monasteries under the ecclesiastical control of a Papal legate. Those times are still referred to with indignation as days of pillage and violence.

In 1430, after a renewed but short period of purely Orthodox control, the monasteries once again came under alien domination. On this occasion it was the Turk who was the superior power. It must be admitted that the communities of Mount Athos were certainly fortunate in their dealings with the Turks, who for religious reasons, if for no other, might have been expected to extinguish the foundations and to confiscate their wealth. The Turk,

however, so far from abusing his power, maintained the status of the monasteries and in return for an annual tribute, even afforded them some protection.

During the Cretan War of 1645-69, things did not go so well with the monks, for the Turks requiring money with which to fight the Venetians, increased the amount of the tribute ; while the Venetians, who were more powerful at sea than the Turks, did not fail upon occasion to extract a second tribute for themselves.

About 1783 the monasteries, which at this date were very slackly administered and were showing signs of moral and financial decay, assumed a new lease of life with the foundation of the College of Vatopedi and the introduction of reforms by the Patriarch Gabriel. Thus the closing years of the eighteenth century witnessed considerable activity upon Athos which, however, was checked by the outbreak of the Greek revolution, and the consequent occupation of Athos by the Turks. The monasteries unfortunately cannot be altogether acquitted of blame in this connection. The Turks had hitherto treated them at least with fairness, due allowance being made for religious differences and the custom of the time, and, as was recognized by many of the monks themselves, the communities had really no excuse for participating in the trouble.

However, influences had been at work amongst the younger monks, a number of whom joined the Greek forces. Defeat following, the monks and many other fugitives retired into the peninsula where some inefficient efforts were made at further resistance.

By December 1821, the Turks had entered the peninsula and had quartered themselves on the monasteries. This occupation was a veritable disaster. The younger monks, fearing the worst, had made their escape overseas and there remained only the more elderly inmates who lacked both the mental and physical agility to grapple with the innumerable problems which now presented themselves.



TEMPLE OF NEPTUNE, SUNION

Many of the treasures of the monasteries found their way into Turkish homes in Constantinople and elsewhere, and some were even sold by the monks for their own purposes.

A heavy tribute of 1,500,000 Piastres was levied equally amongst the twenty monasteries which were now to be found on the peninsula, and nine years of Turkish occupation left the monasteries largely deserted and considerably impoverished.

The Turkish occupation was followed by a period of intrigue to which the poverty of the monasteries contributed. Serbs, Bulgarians, Rumanians and Greeks were frequently in competition for control of the foundations and in 1839 we find the convent of Russiko acquired by the Russians from the Greeks, and thereafter for a time Russian influence becomes very strong upon Athos. So much is this the case that by 1869 Russian was used in the services of the *Katholikon* on alternate days. However, by 1874 Greek intrigue had made itself felt, and a commission appointed by the monastery to inquire into the point, decided that the abbot and two-thirds of the monks must always be Greek. This decision upon appeal to the Patriarch was reversed, and a Russian abbot was placed in charge of the monastery.

A curious development of this feud occurred between 1856-63 when an attempt was made by the Russian faction to capture one of the poorer monasteries. The abbot whom they appointed was dismissed, however, by the Patriarch on the ground that he was an Ionian. The monks, who resented this action, placed themselves in an attitude of defence and hoisted the Union Jack, appealing at the same time to the British Embassy on the ground that the Ionian Isles were a British possession.

At the back of this and other more subtle attempts to capture the administration of the monasteries, lay the conviction that Russia was the premier Orthodox State and as such had a predominant claim to ecclesiastical

influence in Orthodox areas. That the Athos intrigues ever possessed any serious political significance, as has been suggested, is not altogether certain.

In 1861 the Monasteries of Mount Athos, together with those of Meteora, sustained a severe loss from the confiscation of the monastic lands in Rumania. These lands for the most part had been attached to Rumanian monasteries which Athos had absorbed, and are said to have produced a yearly revenue of about £120,000.

Whether such a robbery as the Rumanian Government perpetrated, for robbery it certainly was, is justifiable, is a question which people will doubtless decide for themselves. Apart, however, from questions of abstract right or wrong, there was a good deal to be said for the action. Governments in their responsibility for education and the social well-being of nations have long since superseded the Church, to which, in days now past, this responsibility attached, and moneys left to the Church as a beneficent social power can doubtless to-day be more effectively employed by the government. At the root of the matter lies the question whether these moneys were left to the Church as a Church, or were entrusted to the Church for purposes upon which it is no longer in a position to employ them.¹

Of the twenty monasteries existing upon Athos, fourteen have suffered severe loss from this source. There followed a time of extreme financial embarrassment. It is true that certain monasteries continued to hold property in Russia, but as a consequence of friction between Russia and the Patriarchate, Russian funds since 1872 had been administered by the State and only two-fifths of the net revenues reached the monasteries.

¹ The sum offered by the newly constituted Rumanian Government of the time was so inadequate as to amount to a refusal of compensation. The offer was declined, and Greece has never recognized this confiscation.

The peninsula of Athos is administered by a General Assembly, representing the sovereign monasteries and sitting in Karyes. The president of the Assembly is the representative of the senior monastery. The Assembly is elected annually and meets three days a week. This body has under its control a small force of police, but it does not interfere with the internal administration of the monasteries themselves. Appeals from decisions by the Assembly lie in ecclesiastical matters to the Patriarch and upon points of law, to the Greek Courts.

The authority of the Patriarch over Athos is strictly limited. He cannot, for instance, dispossess an abbot except at the request of a sufficiently powerful body of monks within the monastery concerned. Neither can he personally appoint an abbot, although he is informed of such appointments by the General Assembly which makes them.

The Greek Government is represented upon the peninsula only by a few police and customs officers.

The monasteries themselves are administered in some cases as Cœnobiac and in others as Idiorrhythmic. In the former case the monks constitute, as it were, a brotherhood and are subject to an abbot whose power is absolute. Money and property is common. In the latter case government is by two Trustees who, in practice, are themselves subject to a Committee of a dozen or so of the leading monks. The monks are permitted to possess personal property. The discipline and rule in the Cœnobiac monasteries is more rigid and austere than in the Idiorrhythmic. The Cœnobiac monasteries are Dionysiou, Koutloumousiou, Zographou, Karakallou, Simopetra, Paulou, Xenophontos, Gregoriou, Esphigmenou, Russiko, and Kastamonitou. Novices to be admitted to these monasteries must be above twenty years old. Older men may be admitted if their services are likely to contribute to the well-being of the community.

The Idiorrhythmic monasteries, which are wealthier than the Cœnobiac, are Lavra, Votopedi, Iveron, Chilandari, Pantokratoros, Xeropotamou, Docheiariou, Philotheou and Stavroniketa. These monasteries are governed by Trustees aided by ten to fifteen monks who form an Assembly. Although an abbot is elected in these monasteries, he is subservient to the Assembly and his post is purely nominal.

Mr. Hasluck remarks that it is difficult to assess the motive which draws the bulk of the novices to these monasteries.

" Most Greeks, and indeed most men, have ambitions at twenty, so that the laziness, so often alleged, is an insufficient explanation. The motive is probably at its crudest, the fear of a very material hell, joined to a conviction based on deeply rooted tradition, that the holy life is socially the monastic abstinence and mortification. Finer spirits possibly share the feeling that the world also is benefited by their prayers and that the few righteous men may save the city. Some of the younger men at least have tasted life; I met several who had emigrated to America and returned disgusted with its noise and glare to the simplicity and quiet of the mountain."

In the Cœnobiac monasteries the monks fast constantly, never eat meat, and pass long hours of the day and night in prayer. So strict is the rule prohibiting the eating of flesh that meat broth, if ordered for a sick brother, is prepared outside the monastery. The staple foods are vegetables and oil, rice and fish, with bread and wine.

As has been remarked above, the monasteries now own the entire peninsula, and the lay population are tenants of the monasteries and dependent upon the goodwill of those communities.

What tends to make the monasteries particularly noteworthy in the view of English travellers is the fact that women are arbitrarily excluded from the peninsula. Where a similar rule obtains elsewhere, it is often more honoured in the breach than in the observance, but at

Mount Athos there is no compromise in the attitude adopted by the monks towards the most potent of the snares with which the Devil entraps mankind.

It is interesting to observe that, the absence of female society notwithstanding, all travellers to Mount Athos pay similar tributes to the courtesy, kindness and unfailing good nature of the monks.

Mahaffy, however, comments upon the sombre and gloomy appearance presented by Karyes and the permanent silence and sadness which encompass the men and boys who reach the peninsula from the mainland to work as servants and muleteers. It is indeed difficult to imagine prolonged life in a community in which woman does not exist.

Doubtless certain of the monks cherish a secret design of stepping from a high post in Athos to one of more worldly consideration within the Greek Church elsewhere, but, such ambitions apart, life at Athos is a life devoid of hope, passion and desire. Without women, one home is much the same as another, one employment as good as another, one reward as valuable as another.

The typical Greek monastery is a more or less rectangular structure enclosing a church. In Athos, as in Meteora, the exigency of the site has frequently caused some modification in this design, but generally speaking, it will be found that the structure is as nearly rectangular as the site permits, that the containing walls are backed upon the inside by living rooms, store rooms, the refectory, and so on, and that in the court-yard so enclosed, a church has been erected. The extent to which the architect sought to guard against attack from the outside is apparent in all the Mount Athos monasteries. In many cases they will be found perched upon inaccessible rocks, and even where this is the case, the height of the containing wall is made to add considerably to the height of the rock upon which it is erected, the only rooms with

windows facing outwards being those above the level of the walls. Rooms upon ground level are lighted from the court-yard within the monastery. Finally, each monastery is provided with a tower which, when necessary, could be used either for the purpose of observation or defence.

Lavra, the most important of the monasteries, is said to have been Idiorryhthmic before 1573, when it became Coenobiac, only, however, once again to become Idiorrhythmic. It is surrounded by high and strong walls with defensive towers at intervals. As is the case with all the monasteries, there is but one entrance, defended by several iron doors.

The following description by Athelstan Riley will give some idea of the interior.

“ Inside the Lavra is a confused mass of buildings of every shape and size; even those which surround the court are built of various heights and patterns, with roofs of different pitch and level; here a balcony projects, there a verandah or an arcade breaks the surface of the wall; and in the centre of the quadrangle are churches, domestic offices, trees, and fountains dotted about in picturesque confusion. There are no blank walls or pavements; all is cut up into little courts and nooks and corners casting well defined lights and shadows under the Eastern sky.”

All the Athos monasteries possess various relics of great reputed sanctity, and Lavra by no means takes a second place in this respect. One of its most cherished possessions is seven inches of wood taken, it is claimed, from the Cross and presented to the monastery by the Emperor Nicephorus.

Both the church and the refectory are of unusual interest, the former being to a large extent the original structure erected by Athanasius, and the latter the finest example of its kind upon the peninsula.

Paulou Monastery is distant about three hours by road from Lavra, the journey being made through much wild and beautiful scenery. This building stands high upon

a shelf of rock and overlooks the sea. The monastery until 1404 was a dependency of Xeropotamou. Serbian and Bulgarian influence was strong in this monastery for many years. The present building is largely a modern structure erected in 1902.

Karakallou is situated upon a rocky promontory two miles from the sea, its Gothic appearance and beautiful setting making a delightful picture. Like the Paulou, the Karakallou is partly a modern structure, the original building having suffered from fire in 1874. The following note by Curzon is of interest as showing the small attention given to literature by the monks, in itself a fair indication of the measure of their intelligence.

“The library I found to be a dark closet near the entrance of the church ; it had been locked up for many years, but the agoumenos made no difficulty in breaking the old-fashioned padlock by which the door was fastened.” Curzon adds that he found about four or five hundred volumes and some manuscripts, of which about thirty were on vellum.

Iveron, a monastery of great size, is partly of modern construction. A notable feature is the clock-tower of which the clock, Athelstan Riley tells us, is of Venetian or Genoese construction and “probably one of the earliest timepieces in existence.”

Stavroniketa, about an hour’s ride from Iveron, is dedicated to St. Nicholas, the wonder worker. The chief treasure of this monastery is an *Eikon* in mosaic of St. Nicholas which according to the legend was flung into the sea by a heretic from some distant shore and subsequently discovered by a fisherman at Athos whither it had in some way propelled itself. That it was in fact washed up by the sea is extremely probable, since an oyster shell, separately preserved in the church, is said to have been attached to it. Other relics are the left hand of St. Anne, a few teeth of St. John the Baptist, a

lump of earth and bones, said to be the relics of 20,000 martyrs of Nicomedia, and a piece of the shoulder of St. Basil. Athelstan Riley, who appears to accept miraculous stories with mingled astonishment and awe, unfortunately omits to comment upon this curious assortment.

Dionysiou, in situation one of the most picturesque of the monasteries, is built upon a precipitous and nearly isolated rock overlooking the sea. Its founder is said to have been a monk of Kastoria. The monastery possesses, of course, the customary relics.

Simopetra, called, as the name suggests, after Saint Peter, is probably the most astonishing in appearance of all the Athos monasteries, erected as it is upon the summit of a great rock about 1,000 feet above the sea. A massive aqueduct, consisting of two rows of arches approaching the monastery from one side, adds greatly to the apparent size of the building.

Karyes, the administrative centre of the peninsula, is a small village of no particular interest, at which may be purchased various souvenirs and photographs.

While it should not be supposed that the monks of Athos are necessarily ignorant of the outside world, this is undoubtedly the case with the majority of them. Most generally the life at Athos is one to which the monk has apprenticed himself more by hazard than of design, and by such the severe obligations which it imposes are more or less faithfully discharged; amongst the minority are those who find in Athos a lazy existence devoid of all responsibility, and some who seek in abstinence and prayer a way to God.

CHAPTER XVI

METEORA MONASTERIES

“It is difficult to understand by what process of reasoning they could have persuaded themselves that, by living in this useless, inactive way, they were leading holy lives.”—ROBERT CURZON.

THE journey from Athens to the Meteora Monasteries is not precisely an *affaire de luxe* but the monasteries themselves more than repay the inconvenience of reaching them.

To deal first with the journey, a somewhat lengthy railway trip is involved from Athens to Demerli, but as I have stated elsewhere in this book, the scenery *en route* compensates one for a slow train, a not over clean carriage and the absence of a restaurant car. Affairs in the Near East change fairly rapidly, but a few months ago at any rate, the Simplon-Orient Express did not stop at Demerli, and it was necessary to rely upon the ordinary Greek service. Reaching Demerli in the early evening, one changes from the standard gauge railway to the narrow gauge line which runs from Volo to Kalambaka, skirting the Pindos range of mountains on the left. This little line which boasts, I believe, two trains daily over a part of its length, is a kind of glorified tramway, and in something not much better than a tramcar the traveller bumps along for three or four hours through the dark, stopping every now and again at some small station, which often can be no more than a centre for villages out of sight. At any rate, time and again I failed to see any-

thing beyond the trampled earth that marked the platform and possibly one small hut which constituted, I presume, the station official's residence.

As this little train jolted upon its way, the semi-wild sheep dogs of lonely shepherds would dash out of the darkness and accompany us for long distances. I noticed, however, that these dogs appeared to have their own territories, for a few moments after one pair of dogs had turned home another would appear and take up the pursuit.

I did not attempt to reach Kalambaka in one day, but broke my journey at Trikala where I spent the night. Trikala is a fair specimen of a provincial Greek town. It contains a number of small cafés, a few shops with very indifferent goods, and a number of houses which, at least in appearance, are not uninviting. Like other provincial towns in the centre of Greece, Trikala does not boast a solitary inn which in this country we should consider even fourth-rate. I was taken to the best hotel in the place and found it to consist of a long passage from either side of which opened bedrooms containing in each case two or three, or even more beds. The ordinary Greek does not hire a room but a bed, and he is indifferent to the presence of other travellers in the same apartment.

It is gratifying to know, however, that one can always hire a room for oneself by the simple expedient of paying for all the beds it contains. The inn was destitute of anything in the nature of a public room, but at one end of the passage stood an ancient German piano considerably the worse for wear, with, gathered about it, several dingy chairs and a decrepit lounge. The inn did not cater for its guests, who were expected to take their meals at some café or other. To my mind this is of small importance late in the day; but I confess that early in the morning I find a convention of this sort entirely exasperating. A

cup of tea, or well-made coffee, assumes a prodigious value in a land where neither one nor the other is to be had in any circumstances, and never are they more desired than when the necessity to catch an early train follows a sleepless night. The Greeks, I may say, are by no means bad hands at making Turkish coffee, but this somewhat thick and sweet mixture is, in my opinion, most uninviting in the early hours of the morning.

I have described the inn at Trikala at some length merely because the traveller in inland Greece will come across similar inns continually.

Starting early the following morning by the same little narrow gauge railway that had brought me from Demerli, we pottered along for many miles over the plain to Kalambaka. While still a little distance from this town, I was rejoiced to see the great rocks which rise like columns many hundreds of feet in height and upon the pinnacles of which, like the nests of gigantic birds, are perched the Meteora monasteries. Anything more extraordinary than the appearance of these monasteries can scarcely be imagined. The difficult and tortuous track which leads to them cannot be seen from Kalambaka, and while his dragoman negotiates for mules or ponies, the visitor will inevitably marvel, as I did, that such places should ever have been built, and still more that men should have been found willing to live in them.

The journey from Kalambaka to the monasteries is made by pony or mule. Personally, the day being a fine one, I chose a pony. If the weather has been bad, however, and the rocks are still wet under foot, it is advisable to take a mule, unpleasant as that animal's gait always seems to be.

The track from Kalambaka to the Meteoron, the largest of the monasteries, is a lengthy and, by reason of its steepness, a somewhat exciting affair. The height of the Meteoron above sea level is 1,820 feet. However, sooner

or later the track comes to a conclusion about 150 feet below the monastery. And now, until a year or so ago, a final ordeal awaited the traveller for there were but two methods of obtaining ingress to the monastery, one being by means of ladders fixed so loosely to the cliff that the ends would sway in the wind, and the other by a net attached to a long rope which was wound up by the monks. The height of the monasteries above the highest point to which the rocks can be scaled varies slightly, but the ascent by ladder or net was in most cases from 150 to 200 feet. The monks, by long practice, had acquired the knack of scaling the ladders without misgiving, but few travellers ventured to imitate them. The ascent even in the net was by no means child's play.

To my delight on my arrival at the Meteoron Monastery, I found it would not be necessary for me to undertake a similar feat, a stone stairway having been built from the rocky ledge where we dismounted to the monastery about 150 feet above us. Women are not admitted to this monastery and the utmost concession that can be secured upon their behalf is that they may await the return of the privileged male half-way up the staircase to which I have alluded.

Within the monastery I was introduced to the Chief Priest who treated me with the greatest civility. The customary Turkish coffee was forthcoming, and the inevitable Greek liqueur, which I always detested.

The church within the monastery walls contains a wealth of paintings in brilliant colours, gold being much in evidence. But, apart from its unique situation, the Meteoron church is not particularly noteworthy. I was, however, much intrigued by the spot where, if I rightly understood my dragoman, the Chief Priest one day expects to be buried. The small cell which opened off the church, appeared astonishingly remote and unworldly. But the day of these monasteries is past. No one can



A MONASTERY AT METEORA

say what the future may hold in store for them, and the tomb may be less permanent than from its circumstances it should be.

Some idea of the gradual decay of the Meteoron, which is the largest and most important of the Meteora monasteries, may be gathered from the fact that the buildings could accommodate fifty or more monks and at one time housed that number. Mr. Curzon, however, who visited Meteoron in 1834, only noticed "about twenty" inmates. I myself did not see more than four and was told that at present there are not more than five or six in all.

When visiting these monasteries I was struck with something Tibetan in the features of the Chief Priest as well as in the appearance of the monasteries themselves. Quite possibly this impression, which in any event is based only upon such photographs of Tibetan priests and monasteries as I have seen, is misleading. The impression was, however, sufficiently strong to make me wish that I was better qualified to make the comparison.

Being desirous of photographing the Chief Priest, I asked my dragoman to secure his permission to do so. This request, however, was at first refused in a very positive fashion and I was much puzzled as to the reason. Inquiries elicited the fact that he had previously consented to be photographed upon the distinct understanding that copies of the picture were to be sent to him, and that unfortunately this promise had not been fulfilled. However, it fortunately occurred to me to inquire whether the unfulfilled promise had been given by an Englishman, and when the Chief Priest replied "No, it was a Greek," I burst out in English to my dragoman, "Tell him that I am an Englishman." This outburst won the day, and I reproduce the picture which he was good enough to pose for. By way of showing how difficult it sometimes is to make good a promise of this nature, I may state that on my return to Athens I had six copies of the

photograph printed off and handed them to Messrs. Cook's representative to send to the monastery. Some months elapsed without anybody desiring to make the trip and Messrs. Cook's representative quite rightly registered the package and entrusted it to the Greek postal authorities who carried it to Kalambaka, from which point, thanks to the utter slackness and carelessness of the officials there, it was returned to Athens marked "Unknown." As a matter of fact the package had been addressed in Greek characters by a Greek and the postal authorities at Kalambaka could never have been in any doubt for whom it was intended. Presumably they were not desirous of climbing to the monastery. That, I imagine, would have completed the history of my photographs had it not happened that three months later I found myself once again in Athens, and happening to remember the Chief Priest at Meteoron, I called at Messrs. Cook's office to hear what had happened. To cut a long story short, I was finally able, with the assistance of Messrs. Cook's manager, to make a third attempt to get these photographs to their destination, but I am still without any definite proof that they reached there.

I had arranged before leaving Athens to spend the night in the Hagios Stephanos, one of the Meteora Monasteries founded by the Byzantine Emperor Andronicus III. However, the previous day at Trikala my dragoman had received information of a railway strike which was due to commence throughout Greece at the end of twenty-four hours.

I much regretted the necessity which I was under to leave these fascinating monasteries so much sooner than I had intended. I was able, however, to rest for a short while at the St. Stephanos and to sample, if not to enjoy, the lunch which the monks provided. The room in which this meal was served was airy and clean, but after attempting one or two of the dishes brought to me, I fell

back upon some sandwiches which I fortunately had in my satchel.

Hagios Stephanos stands upon a rock which on one side is separated from the mountain only by a chasm, spanned by a wooden bridge; on the other three sides the rock falls sheer for many hundreds of feet. The monastery buildings are irregular and without any special interest. The church, however, contains some delightful carvings which are said to have been executed in Russia, and to have been presented to the monastery during the reign of Ali Pasha.

Unlike the Meteoron, the St. Stephanos makes no difficulty about admitting visitors of the fair sex. There were four or five monks living in the monastery at the time of my visit as against the thirteen or fourteen monks and several women seen by Mr. Curzon in 1834.

From the St. Stephanos the view was magnificent in the extreme.

A small library may be found both in St. Stephanos and Meteoron, but it is doubtful whether any manuscripts of value survive in them. The precious manuscripts described by Curzon have long since disappeared, some to find a home in the University Library at Athens.

The history of the Meteora monasteries is obscure and very little, if any, information can be secured from the priests. Beyond the obvious fact that the monasteries are "extremely old" they know little or nothing. Some years ago, however, a manuscript was found in the library of Hagios Varlaam which traces the monasteries to a common dependence on the Church of the Virgin of Doupiani which was situated beneath the Meteora rocks.

If we go far enough back, however, we must give credit for the monasteries to those hermits who inhabited the caves still to be seen in these rocks. Hermits were at one time fair game for anyone in search of diversion, and it is not surprising that they should have sought these isolated abodes. Many of these caves are very high up, a fact

which must eventually have suggested the erection of monasteries upon the pinnacles. There was, however, another reason which must have weighed with the builders besides the isolated nature of the site so in keeping with their intentions. Robbers were plentiful and churches were frequently rich and we should probably not be far wrong if we suggested that the site was chosen as much with a view to safety as to pious contemplation. The monasteries at Meteora are by no means the only ones in Greece which suggest that the monks deliberately made their homes as inaccessible as possible.

Even in recent times these monasteries have been subjected to attack. Tozer in "The Highlands of Turkey" mentions that on his visit to Meteora in 1853 he was told by the monks that the Meteoron monastery had been pillaged as recently as 1831. It must have been the case, however, although the monks do not appear to have admitted it, that the robbers entered by guile, as they could scarcely have done so by force. Probably they induced the monks to admit one or two of their number, who in turn admitted the others.

At different times there has been considerable friction between the monasteries themselves, time hanging heavily upon the hands of the inmates. The monk in Hagios Varlaam complains bitterly in his manuscript of the monks of Meteoron, who, one Easter Sunday, descended from their lofty perch and laid waste the Varlaam vegetable garden in the valley beneath.

The Turkish conquest does not appear to have reacted harshly upon the monks, who as a body are normally respected by Moslems. They shared, however, the degradation of the Church under Moslem rule.

In all, about twenty-three monasteries were erected at Meteora in the fourteenth century, but half that number had disappeared within the first 200 years, and to-day only four are inhabited. Leake in his "Travels in

“Northern Greece” mentions an inscribed stone which records that Meteora was built in the year of the world 6396 by Greek computation, that is in A.D. 1388, the name of the builder being given as Joasaph, Despot of Trikala, who was related to the Imperial family at Constantinople.

Joasaph, however, was a far more important personage than this suggests. Born at Constantinople as John Cantacuzene and connected on his mother's side with the house of Palæologus, he was, on the accession of Andronicus III., entrusted with the supreme administration of the affairs of the Eastern Roman Empire. On the death of this Emperor in 1341 he became regent and guardian of the heir to the throne. He was, however, entirely unscrupulous and his attempt to usurp the royal authority plunged the country into civil war. From 1347 he reigned over what remained of the Empire as joint emperor with John Palæologus, until in 1354 the latter attacked and captured him. Cantacuzene deserved nothing better than to lose his life, and no doubt was greatly relieved when he was permitted to assume a monk's habit and, under the name of Joasaph Christodoulos, to retire to Meteora. He must, we think, have remained to the end a strange enigma to the devout but inexperienced monks who shared his solitude. A foundation for nuns set up about the same time by Maria, sister of Joasaph, did not survive for any length of time. It would appear, however, that the site of Meteoron had been chosen at an earlier date by a hermit named Athanasius, who reached the spot a fugitive from Mount Athos and who, with the assistance of the Cathigumen of Doupiani, built the first “Convent of the Transfiguration” on the summit of the peak. But although Joasaph undoubtedly lavished money on the monastery, the following inscription, which appears within the church of Meteoron, suggests that he is not entitled to all the credit, as would appear from the inscription mentioned by Leake.

“ This most sacred temple was built from the foundation by the labour and at the expense of our pious fathers, Athanasius and Joasaph, present holy founders. It was painted with figures by the aid of the most humble fathers in the year 6990 (A.D. 1482), the second of the month of November.”

The date given is of course that upon which the paintings were executed, and does not refer to the building of the church.

Hagios Nikolaus appears to have followed Meteoron, Hagios Varlaam was founded in 1536, and is said to have been named in honour of a hermit of that name who protected Athanasius. This is, however, disputed by those who would give the honour to a contemporary monk of the same name who took a leading part in the “ Transfiguration ” controversy. St. Stephen’s, Hagios Stephanos, is credited to the Emperor Andronicus III.

I have mentioned the steady decrease in the number of monks to be found at Meteora, but whether this is to be attributed to the gradual impoverishment of the monasteries or results from other causes, I am unable to say. I was told that many of the more zealous monks had migrated to Mount Athos. As a matter of fact, I doubt whether the monasteries could support any particular number of inmates at the present moment, their wealth having steadily diminished from the time their estates in Rumania were confiscated in 1861.

To-day their chief source of income is to be found in the voluntary contributions of the pious. That these are almost negligible I can well believe. On the other hand, the monks have small use for money and are able, I fancy, to pass a lazy and contented life at a very cheap rate. I was told that no new novices are now being taken and that on the death of the present inmates, the monasteries will be tenantless, at least, so far as monks are concerned.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MEGASPELÆON MONASTERY

“If we compare Greek Monasticism with that of the West, its history is curiously uninteresting.”—J. O. HANNAY.

AT the foot of Mount Chelmos, an almost perpendicular cliff wall, about 500 feet high, nestles the unique monastery of Megaspelæon. Its name—Mega-spelæon—implies “Great Cavern,” and such indeed it is, for the whole irregular mass of the monastery buildings—church, storehouses, kitchens, cellar and cells—are contained in an immense cave, which extends about 90 feet into the precipitous face of the mountain. The tradition of the monks claims that this is one of the oldest monastic institutions in Greece and attributes its foundation in the fourth century to the maiden Euphrosyne, one of a group of Christian virgins who are said to have donned male attire and passed for men in order more successfully to lead a celibate and ascetic life. But the convent has been several times destroyed by fire and the front of the present building (a vast wall, 12 feet thick, built in the face of the cavern), except a small part at the north end, dates only from the close of the eighteenth century.

Above the portal, the visitor sees a much prized painting, in the Byzantine style, of the Virgin nursing the infant Christ (with far from infantile features), and surrounded by saints and angels. The library, to which one passes through a somewhat gaudy chapel, contains none but ecclesiastical books and even among these are few

of conspicuous value, but the monks treasure them greatly and assert that many valuable books have been destroyed in the fires. But, if the convent is not rich in books, materially it is one of the wealthiest in Greece.

During its best days Megaspelæon became the centre at which were discussed some of the earliest projects for the liberation of Greece, and from its gates the bishop Germanos of Patras set out to raise the standard of revolt at Kalavryta in 1821. Five years later, Ibrahim Pasha, returning from dealing his last crushing blow to the Greek rebellion at Messolonghi, remembered these things against Megaspelæon and proceeded to besiege it. The monks skilfully and promptly raised batteries and fortified the front of the building, the only accessible side, and Ibrahim Pasha and his Arabs were driven to scaling the overhanging mountain and hurling down rocks and trunks of trees. But so overhanging was the cliff that the missiles fell beyond the monastery and the doughty Pasha was obliged to raise the siege and withdraw with considerable losses.

The monastery continued to stand for the principles of freedom during the long Turkish domination, when, though the Greek spirit was crushed, the monks purchased, at considerable expense, the free exercise of their privileges amongst which was the exclusion of Turks from entering the monastery.

The religious community within the monastery forms a small republic, governed by its own laws under Wardens (Epitropoi) annually elected; i.e. the monastery is *Idiorrhythmic*, or individualistic, as opposed to the system of the Coenobites, who are governed by a single abbot chosen for life. An abbot does indeed preside, but as he is subject to re-election every five years he has no opportunity of exercising his powers in a drastic fashion. Each monk owns a share of the convent's property,



MONASTERY OF MEGASPELÆON

including a piece of land, which is his to cultivate and superintend.

The militant spirit that defended the monastery against its enemies is departed, and an atmosphere of industrial thrift and kindly hospitality remains. No stranger is turned away without a cup of coffee, unless he arrives after sunset, when the gates are shut. Persons arriving after sunset may sleep in an outhouse. But even this is probably not a cast-iron rule, since other monasteries have been known to open their doors as late as 10 o'clock. No direct remuneration for hospitality is demanded by the monks, but travellers are expected to put a donation into the poor-box and something is usually given to the servants.

Women are not excluded from the monastery, another example of the absence of the austere rules of the Cenobiac monasteries.

CHAPTER XVIII

CORFU

“ That traveller must be very fastidious in scenery who would not be both delighted and surprised at the first sight of Corfu.”
—Prof. D. T. ANSTED, F.R.S.

THE island of Corfu comprises about 227 square miles. It is separated from the Albanian coast by a strait varying in breadth from two to fifteen miles, and is shaped like a sickle with the hollow side facing Epirus.

As everybody is aware, Corfu has figured largely in history since 734 B.C., when, under the name of Corcyra, it was first colonized by the Corinthians. It may well be doubted, however, whether the most exciting chapters of its history have not yet to be written. It is too much to claim that Corfu dominates the Adriatic, but it is certain that no government desiring a paramount position in the Adriatic can afford to ignore it. Its influence, indeed, in the hands of an energetic and efficient Power, would be very considerable. The first impression of the island, however, is not one of military values. As the steamer makes its way through the blue waters of the strait opening up one wood-clad hill after another, the visitor can only marvel that so delightful a spot should be comparatively so little known.

Corfu, the capital town of the island, is chiefly famous for its harbour, which has other advantages than those of mere beauty, great as its beauty actually is. There are few naval Powers so well endowed with bases in or

about the Mediterranean, that Corfu harbour fails to attract them. The town, however, as a town, has little to offer beyond reasonably comfortable accommodation and a few picturesque streets. But the charm of the island lies in the walks and drives which may be taken through its olive-clad hills. The olive tree is, indeed, a feature of the Corfiote landscape. As Mr. Dell remarks :

“ Of all the foreign masters of Corfu, the Venetians have left the strongest mark, for they caused the olive trees to be planted, and these are to-day the distinguishing features of Corfu, covering its rocky hills and valleys with a soft mantle of green, and filling its storehouses with the precious oil.”¹

The cypress also flourishes on the limestone slopes, and rises, tall and majestic, amongst the olives. On all sides the visitor will notice the same luxuriant vegetation, fruit trees wild and cultivated, pears, figs, pomegranates and flowers which at times present a blaze of colour amongst the green foliage of the trees.

The population of the island has increased of late, and now reaches about 130,000 persons. The language in current use is Modern Greek, but the visitor, as often as not, will be addressed in Italian. The Corfiote, as a general rule, is not excessively enterprising and industrious. But this statement, correct as it is in the main, will probably require to be modified at an early date, for of late years the island has come in for more general use. As showing the way in which industries can spring up, fortuitously, as it were, I was informed that some of the refugees from Asia Minor, who were dumped in Corfu, from sheer boredom, commenced to make the kind of mat which hitherto had been profitably exported only by the Turk. After a short time, this fact came to the notice of the Greek Governor, who so successfully interested certain American firms, that a regular trade resulted.

¹ “ Isles of Greece,” by Anthony Dell.

Quite apart from the influence of the more self-reliant Greek from Anatolia, the Corfiote is not altogether unaffected by the presence in his midst of such institutions as the engraving and printing factory which was recently established on the island, and which has, I believe, a concession for the making of bank-notes, postage stamps, government bonds, and so on. Corfu, again, is the training ground for the new police force, which, under English organization, is gradually superseding the old Greek gendarmerie on the mainland. It is the olive trees, however, which play the most important part in the economic life of the islanders. Although for some time the olives were scarcely up to the standard of the mainland, owing to lack of attention given to the trees, the establishment of an up-to-date olive oil refinery in Corfu has encouraged the Corfiotes to pay more attention to the yield of their trees. Corfu, in short, is just awaking to a future of some consequence. I confess, however, that, for my part, I have considerable sympathy with the *laissez-faire* attitude which once characterized the Corfiote. Mr. Andreas Michalopoulos, who probably can speak of the islanders and their virtues with more authority than anyone else, draws my attention to the interesting fact that the best musicians in Greece come from Corfu. Quite 75 per cent of the members of the Athenian Academy of Music, he tells me, are Corfiotes. The Corfiote, indeed, has been for many years the indolent dreamer of romantic and impracticable delights, and if, under the pressure of commerce and economic competition, he is gradually changing into a man of business, I do not know that I, for one, find the change a matter for rejoicing. However, it must be many years, fortunately, before the Corfiote entirely loses his characteristics.

One island habit will certainly not escape the visitor, the ability of the women to carry extraordinary weights with the easiest balance upon their heads. This habit,

it is true, is by no means confined to Corfu. I have seen the same thing in countries as widely apart as Paraguay and Corsica, and wherever I have encountered it, I have remarked the easy grace which it imparts to the stride. The swing in walking is necessarily confined to the hips and limbs, and the poise of the body is constant. The hair is dressed at the top of the head to take the weight of whatever is to be carried, and frequently a pad is employed in addition. Astonishing loads are carried by women in this fashion, and the habit, so far from injuring them, appears to improve the figure ; at any rate, I have never encountered amongst these women the board-like and hipless figures which are now such a feature of the English landscape.

A pleasant drive from Corfu to Canone at the end of the peninsula, forming one side of the once celebrated lagoon, brings the visitor within easy reach of the Villa of Achilleion erected by the Italian architect, Carito, for the Empress Elizabeth of Austria. A trip in this direction is well worth making, if only for the pleasant drive to Canone, and the pull across the lake. The Achilleion is not altogether attractive as a building, although, at the moment, it possesses a certain interest by reason of the fact that it was purchased in 1907 by the then German Emperor. The Greek Government, I understand, has now decided to dispose of this place, and to utilize the proceeds to compensate Greeks who claim to have suffered losses in Germany and elsewhere during the war. The park, descending towards the sea, is very beautiful, but neither the building itself nor its contents are particularly noteworthy. The ex-Kaiser's furniture and ornaments were less rare and *recherché* than might have been anticipated from his artistic temperament. I imagine, however, these attractions, such as they were, are no longer in evidence since, when on a hurried visit to Greece during the autumn of 1925, a

boatman of Corfu, imagining the island to be new to me, tried to tempt me ashore with the information that the Kaiser's furniture was about to be sold "very cheap." I am told that, shortly after the war, the Kaiser requested the Great Powers to permit him to retire to this spot. If that is the case, it is difficult to understand why the necessary permission was not forthcoming. Corfu is at least as remote as Holland. Possibly the permission appeared inconsistent with Mr. Lloyd George's very typical promise to bring the ex-Emperor to England for trial.

One of the great advantages possessed by Corfu over the Greek mainland, is the uniform excellence of its roads. For these and the bridges, the English tourist may thank his own countrymen, for they are relics of the English occupation. Here and there a road is falling into disrepair, and a bridge needs reconstructing. But, on the whole, moving about the island is a simple and pleasant proceeding.

Paleocastritzza, a favourite spot on the north-west coast, affords a charming excursion, the road passing by the Ropa Valley, which was once a dreary swamp, but is now, thanks to the engineer, a fertile plain. The coast, at this point, has been compared, not inaptly, to that of Cornwall.

However, I shall not attempt to describe Corfu in detail; neither will it be necessary here to deal with her early history, for Corfu, although frequently a bone of contention to the ancient Greeks, at no time played a leading part in Greek affairs. The more recent history of the island, however, is not without interest. After many adventures, Corfu settled down to a prolonged period of Venetian government, during which the extortion of the governors was only varied by the more exciting atrocities of marauding Turks.

The fate of Corfu at this time was not very different

from that of many greater States. Upon occasion, the islanders fought heroically ; but their interest was that of their leaders and governors. To the Corfiote, Venice and Constantinople were mere names. In 1713, with Venice in its decline, it seemed that Turkish rule must inevitably establish itself in the island. However, after a siege of seven weeks, the invaders were repulsed, and the Venetian flag still flew from the battlements. It was left for Napoleon to fling the fortunes of Corfu into the melting-pot in 1797. Venice fell to Austria, and the Ionian Isles to France, and the Venetian chapter of Corfiote history was brought to a close. It had not made very satisfactory reading.

French ownership was extremely brief. Within two years, the island had fallen to a Russo-Turkish armament, and Corfu had become the capital of that strange and little-known Federation of the Seven Islands. In 1807, self-government disappears, and the French are once again in possession, and in 1809 the bewildered Corfiotes are defending their city against a hostile British fleet. Then, in 1815, the Seven Islands are constituted a single free and independent State, under the name of the United States of the Ionian Islands, and placed under the protection of Great Britain.

The fact was, however, that Europe was suffering the inevitable reaction from the Napoleonic wars, and the decision of 1815 was really in no way concerned with the interests either of Corfu or Great Britain. So long as Corfu could not become a naval base in the hands of a hostile Power, everybody was satisfied. Thus, in 1817, we find Great Britain taking the line of least resistance, and bestowing upon the Ionian Islands a constitutional charter which "enabled the High Commissioner to do whatever he pleased."

This system, described by Morley as a "not ill-natured despotism," lasted until 1849, when it was slightly modi-

fied. The Corfiotes, however, knew little or nothing of the theoretical delights of Home Rule. Indeed, they were entirely incapable of managing their own affairs, even had they had the opportunity to make the attempt. They had been handed about from one country to another, until the wisest of them would have found it hard to say what his nationality really was. To such men, the beneficent efforts of British Governors to provide good roads and substantial bridges, to suppress murder and to encourage virtue, were almost unintelligible. They had not asked for these advantages, and they were at a loss to imagine why they should pay for them.

It was at this stage of affairs that the British Government decided to impose upon the islands a High Commissioner, who should put their affairs in order. The invitation to Gladstone to assume this highly difficult post, appears to have originated in the brain of Bulwer Lytton, then Colonial Secretary in Lord Derby's second administration. Disraeli afterwards remarked that he "was privy to the plot, but never supposed it would result in anything but endless correspondence."¹ He may well have been astonished. The future of Gladstone was at this time the favourite topic at every political club, and, but a few weeks earlier, the Government had endeavoured by every legitimate means, to induce him to enter the Cabinet. That so brilliant a future should be diverted to the task of providing a few illiterate islanders with a political constitution which it was certain they could never understand, was probably the most astonishing event of the day.

Gladstone left England on 8th November, 1858, and soon made himself responsible for what was, in effect, a scheme of colonial self-government. Meanwhile, an extraordinary event, never satisfactorily explained, had fanned the pro-Greek sympathies of the islanders into a

¹ "Life of Benjamin Disraeli," by Moneypenny and Buckle.

furious flame. Some eighteen months earlier, Sir John Young had addressed to his Government a despatch in which was put forward the suggestion that the Ionian Isles should be given to Greece, or, alternatively, that the five southern islands should be handed over, and Corfu and Paxo retained as a British Colony. We have Morley's authority for the statement that, a few days later, Young, in a private letter, had withdrawn this advice. It happened, however, that the first despatch was stolen from the Foreign Office, as possibly it was intended to be, and published, which certainly was not intended, and the Corfiotes were torn between delight at the support thus unexpectedly forthcoming to their secret aspirations, and fury at the suspicion that such theoretical independence as they had might be taken from them. The position was, from the start, a hopeless one, but, in any event, it is legitimate to doubt whether the peculiar genius of Gladstone was the medium best fitted to cope with Corfiote difficulties. Expedients flourished in Gladstone's mind like vegetation under a tropical sun. The very luxuriance of his imagination precluded that clear path to a definite end which is the secret of successful administration amongst subject peoples. At any rate, Gladstone returned home on the 8th March 1859, and thus effectively removed at the end of four months the only factor in Ionian affairs that afforded any real interest to the protecting Government.

Thus affairs continued until, in 1863, Palmerston's Government decided to cut away the entanglement, and formally handed the Ionian Islands to Greece. Disraeli, who cannot, we fear, be credited with any interest in the islands beyond their use as political expedients, vigorously attacked the settlement. Having reminded Parliament that the Ionian Isles originally came into our possession by right of conquest, he laid down a principle

which still operates, and must continue to operate while human nature remains unchanged.

"There can be no question either in or out of this House that the best mode of preserving wealth is power. A country, and especially a maritime country, must get possession of the strong places of the world, if it wishes to contribute to its power."

Under Greek rule, Corfu has remained contented, and while Greek Governments are scarcely the most efficient in Europe, the island of late years owes much to its Governors. During the Great War, Corfu played a useful part as a resting spot for the Serbian army, after its terrible retreat through Albania, and to-day more than 25,000 Serbians lie in Corfu, the victims of typhus and cholera.

One final note should be added to this slight sketch of Corfiote vicissitudes. It happened that, in September 1923, an Italian delegate on the Albanian Frontier Commission was assassinated in Greece, and, with truly startling despatch, an Italian fleet anchored off Corfu. I heard later, and I believe the information is correct, that the fleet had steam up, and was under orders for a very different destination, when the news of the calamity first reached Rome. But whatever the explanation may be, everybody was astonished by the rapidity of Italian action, and nobody more so than the Corfiotes, who, for the most part, were quite unaware that anything was amiss. An Englishman who happened to be in Corfu at the time gave me an interesting account of the landing. He was much puzzled, as I am myself, that the Italians thought it necessary to come ashore in gas-masks. Corfu was in no condition to defend itself. Indeed, beyond a few policemen in training, and a number of Greek refugees from Anatolia, housed in the ruined English barracks, there was no material from which an army could be improvised. But however that may be, the snout-like effect of the gas-mask was entirely new to many of the



CORFU HARBOUR

women from Anatolia who for some time were in doubt whether these unlooked-for invaders were really of this world. Things might have gone badly for the Greek occupation at this time, had not the Great Powers intervened, and persuaded the Italians to vacate an island which doubtless they would willingly have retained.

It is difficult to leave Corfu without regret, or without the feeling that here is an island destined, in the course of time, to become one of the world's most beautiful pleasure centres. Little by little, the older pleasure resorts of Europe are losing their fascination. In the South of France especially, the speculative builder and smart advertiser are rapidly ruining spots which once were nearly perfect, and every year people go further afield in increasing numbers. Sooner or later Corfu will come into its own. If the Greek Government is wise, however, it will anticipate the future. It would, indeed, be a pity if history were permitted to repeat itself, and if the money-grabbing proclivities of the selfish and unintelligent were allowed to ruin one of the most beautiful islands in European waters.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CHARACTER OF THE GREEK

“ Every man takes care that his neighbour shall not cheat him.”—EMERSON.

“ Every man is as God made him, and often a great deal worse.”—CERVANTES.

AN attempt to convey in a few words an indication of the Greek character necessarily lays itself open to criticism, since in every country men vary considerably. Nations, however, possess certain peculiarities although individuals differ, the national character being the character of countless individuals in the aggregate. It must be understood, therefore, that the criticisms which I have to make of the modern Greek are levelled at a certain average citizen. I desire to make this clear as I have personally met many charming Greeks whose standard in all ways is at least as high, and often higher, than that generally obtaining in this country. It is necessary again to distinguish, not merely between one individual and another, but between the private and public life of the same individual. For this reason it is probably accurate to say that Greek governments are usually more or less corrupt, although it still remains true that the private life of the men who constitute the government is, as often as not, beyond reproach.

The Greeks themselves are well aware of the failings of their governments. Accompanying a friend along the quay at Salónica, I noticed a stevedore place his hand in a barrel and take out three fish. My friend, who was

officially concerned, remonstrated and asked, "Are you not ashamed to be found stealing like this?" to which the stevedore replied, "What, ashamed? Why I only steal three fish, and the government steals millions of drachmae." This was not a mere figure of speech, the remark embodied the conviction of practically every Greek working man.

Speaking one day to an educated Greek about the work of the Refugee Committee under English and American auspices, I hazarded the opinion that the problem of the refugee would soon be settled, to which my friend, a Greek, replied: "If you English and Americans were as big thieves as we Greeks, the refugee would have been settled long ago." I thought at first that I must have misunderstood him or at least that he was concealing his own opinion in order to give a facetious turn to the conversation. This, however, was far from being the case, for he persisted: "Do you think then that we Greeks could administer a Refugee Loan unassisted? I tell you if, instead of the present Commission, we had a number of Greek administrators appointed by the Government, there might be a great deal of sympathy for the refugee, but there would be very little money." Another Greek referring to a high government official, also a Greek, remarked: "He is like the rest of them, he never reaches his office before 11 o'clock, he leaves at 11.30 and he does nothing while he is there, for this he receives about £100 a month." Making every allowance for exaggeration, there is no doubt that the criticism embodies the general opinion of the Greek Civil Service and is of interest as representing the ideas of those educated Greeks who are not in politics.

One experience of my own in this connection is not without interest. Endeavouring to elicit from a high government official some information regarding the action taken by his department in a certain matter before he

himself took office, I received the reply that he had been unable to secure any information upon the point desired as his predecessor, who had left office on the fall of the late government, had taken with him all the departmental papers concerned. It can readily be seen from this fact that it is not an easy matter to call an official to account.

I do not apologize for dealing with these matters, as to my mind the attitude of the ordinary Greek towards his government is extraordinarily significant. But perhaps the matter is best summed up by another remark which I find put down in my notebook.

The Greek with whom I was chatting on this occasion was one whose knowledge of the country cannot possibly be disputed. I asked him how it was the Greeks had so little confidence in their governments. He replied, "Have you seen to-day's paper? A government official has just stolen 2,500,000 drachmae. Now I have heard of many of these cases. Such things constantly happen here, but I do not remember any case in which the thief has been punished. Before the theft can be brought home to somebody it is discovered that some person higher up in the ministry is concerned, and if the offender is ever caught you may be sure he will be protected somehow or other." The more intelligent Greek, in short, accepts the existing state of things, not because he likes it, but because he is powerless to remedy it.

The business man views the question from a slightly different angle. The representatives in Athens of all the big foreign firms make it their business to know who is the mistress of each member of the cabinet, and no firm conversant with the considerations which govern government contracts is likely to scrutinize too closely the expenditure which its agent incurs in the matter of pearl necklaces and diamond rings.

I must again repeat that criticism directed against

certain national characteristics cannot apply to every individual citizen. It is necessary to make this point, since I have no doubt there are people who would be glad to accuse me of gross ingratitude. I will therefore take this opportunity to say that I have nowhere encountered more charming men and women than was my privilege to meet at different times in Greece, and I am glad to remark that I am personally acquainted with business men in Greece whose standard of integrity is such that I should ask no better security than their bare word. But it cannot be said that the standard adhered to by such men is that of Greek business generally.

Those national failings at which I have hinted are naturally more obvious to those of us who have lived in a country in which such failings, although not unknown, are fortunately exceptional. It is necessary to remember that the Greek is born in a certain atmosphere and that he is by nature an intriguer. Negotiation of one sort or another is second nature to the Greek, and, to do him justice, he expects to meet the same weapons that he uses.

The unreliability of the Greek is temperamental, and owes its origin in some part to pure good nature. The Greek lacks the moral courage to make an unsatisfactory reply. If you ask him how many miles it is to a certain place, he may know very well that the answer is eight, but he argues that it is a hot day, that the road is a trying one, and that you look already somewhat tired and depressed, and he replies with a smile, "Three." Over and over again I have experienced the extraordinary inability of the Greek to state a fact, from the concealment of which he has nothing on earth to gain. It is, perhaps, this trait which, more than anything else, exasperates the traveller. The untruth from which the speaker stands to benefit, is morally bad in all ways, but at least it is intelligible. But an untruth which is

purely gratuitous and from which nobody can possibly benefit, is, in my opinion, the most exasperating failing with which one can be brought into immediate contact. However, although this failing is to be met with amongst all types and classes of Greek, it is always possible to meet delightful exceptions.

The Greek rarely hesitates to give, when he is asked to do so. They are a gay people, and live to be happy. Faced with misery, few Greeks have the moral courage to refuse alms. You may call it generosity, or a lack of moral courage, as you please, the result is the same—the beggar does quite well.

But, in a political and civil sense, the great failing of the Greek is his excessive individualism. Collective effort is almost impossible to him. It is possibly this fact that accounts for the small number of Greek business concerns of any size or standing. For the Greeks are probably as clever a people as it is possible to find. If they fail it is not on the score of ability, but from the temperamental bias that in the last resort drives every Greek to play for his own hand.

This temperamental weakness frequently earns for the Greek the reputation of being treacherous. On this score I quote an Englishman in high position in Athens.

“Don’t you believe it—on the contrary. In my opinion if a Greek once takes you into his heart he is faithful to you to the bitter end. Look at Constantine. The Greeks knew perfectly well that if they had him back they would get it in the neck. England, France and everybody was at them about it—but they had him back.”

And there I leave it.

I have spoken of the Greeks as a clever people, but they are more than that. The individual Greek is frequently brilliant, but he is incapable of continual dogged effort. He will draw up a scheme on paper with extraordinary ingenuity, but he will not stand to it in a

cold drizzle. To think of a scheme and to discuss it, therein lies the secret charm of existence for a Greek. The Greek is by temperament a schemer, and an adroit negotiator. He frequently amasses wealth, but very rarely creates it.

I remember reading that we admire most in others, those qualities in which we are ourselves deficient. If this is so, it should go far to explain why the Greek, who is full of good intentions which he is constitutionally incapable of carrying out, admires the Englishman whose intentions are generally selfish, but whose word in a bargain can almost invariably be relied on.

Finally it may not be out of place to touch upon the question whether the modern Greek is descended from the Greek of classical times. This question is the more interesting since whatever view the reader may hold he will experience no difficulty in finding eminent scholars to agree with him.

Both by reason of his attainments and the grace of his literary style, Sir R. C. Jebb is the champion most frequently relied upon by those who maintain a more or less clearly defined line of descent.

“It (the Greek nation) contains, as all would allow, a large infusion of Slavonic blood; but it is a fact equally well established that the strain of Hellenic blood has been perpetual, and that the Hellenic element is that which has determined the type of the modern nationality.”

This is, in any event, a serious claim to make in view of the vicissitudes of the Greek people during the Middle Ages. But apart from the great adulteration of Hellenic blood which took place in later times, is it certain that the Greek was himself of pure stock even so far back as the days of the Roman occupation?

As the Peloponnesian War proceeds, we are conscious that the original Greek to an ever-increasing degree is sharing his rights and his lands with lower races. The

Spartans exterminate the Platæans ; the Athenians, the Melians. We constantly find that every male member of some branch of the original stock is slaughtered, the women being sold into slavery. And side by side with this process of an ever-diminishing aristocracy there is the granting of citizenship and other rights to slaves and freemen required to fill the thinning ranks of the contending forces. We read that in the Classical period four-fifths of the population of Attica were slaves. By the close of the first century A.D., Plutarch estimates that all Greece could not furnish more than three thousand Hoplites.¹ Thus before Greece had much more than commenced her long period of subjection to foreign rule the full-blooded Greek was wellnigh non-existent.

Sir R. C. Jebb contends that nations are often distinguished by broadly marked “tendencies or aptitudes” and proceeds :

“Have the modern and the ancient Greeks any such national characteristics in common ? They have at least two : first, a marked aptitude for city life, as distinguished from rural life on the one hand, and on the other, from the life of a large political organism. Closely connected with this aptitude for city life, is the ability which they have always shown in commerce.”

But surely this argument could be applied with even greater force to prove the descent of the modern Greek from the Ten Lost Tribes. I do not say that there is the slightest connection between the modern Greek and the Levantine Jew. I merely point out that the argument of Professor Jebb might be held to suggest it.

The second “aptitude” is scarcely more helpful :

“Secondly, the Greeks have at every period of their history been true to the love of mental culture.”

¹ The Hoplites were originally heavy-armed foot soldiers of good birth, but even this rule was disregarded during the later days of the Peloponnesian War, when slaves were granted their freedom for no other reason than that they might serve as Hoplites.

A statement of this sort should be supported by something more solid than unlimited enthusiasm. It is at least an exaggeration as applied to the Greeks of to-day; it would be very difficult to prove in respect of the hundreds of years during which Greece was under alien rule, and even as regards the Classical period I am not sure that it is accurate. Can it correctly be said of Sparta that “at every period of her history she was true to the love of mental culture”?—Yet Sparta was as much a part of Greece as Athens.

For my part, I incline to the view that the modern Greek is the descendant of a mixed stock; that the great race of Classical Greece, with its virtues and its vices, its valour, its art, its passions, is gone for ever.

CHAPTER XX

INLAND TRAVEL

“The ear is a less trustworthy witness than the eye.”—
HERODOTUS.

TRAVEL in Greece resolves itself most generally into a choice between two evils, the railway train over a bad track, and the motor-car over a worse road. To deal with the latter first. With the cars themselves there is little cause to complain. I was struck by the great number of American cars to be met with, although English cars were also to be seen in large numbers. The drivers are almost invariably highly skilled, and accidents through any breakdown to the car are infrequent. The roads, however, are almost uniformly bad. It might be supposed that whatever roads were neglected, the main artery between Athens and Piraeus would be kept in good condition, but, as a matter of fact, driving from my hotel to the steamer, I have over and over again expected the springs of the car to smash as we made our way over a series of appalling pot-holes. Where there is comparatively little traffic, the roads are not so cut up, but nowhere is there any sign that the Government or municipalities are prepared to exert themselves to keep the roads in good order. Occasionally, money is voted for the purpose, but it does not appear to be expended, and although when I was last in Greece a small road tax was levied upon every car leaving Athens, my drivers were invariably sceptical as to the ultimate destination of the money so paid. The Greek driver,

however, takes a complete repairing outfit with him, and at the end of the day will spend some time making any adjustments that are called for.

I made my trip through the Peloponnesus entirely by motor-car. I had planned my journey carefully in advance, and my driver set out knowing precisely where he was to go each day, and what hotel or inn he was to stop at each evening. He proved himself to be entirely reliable in every way, and, although from start to finish we were never able to exchange two words in any language known to both of us, we somehow managed to understand each other. Except for their affection for their cars, the Greek driver is as careless as the rest of his countrymen. He has acquired by constant use a certain ability to skate along the edges of extraordinary tracks, but he never displays by the slightest sign that he is conscious of the difficulties which beset other drivers, or that he is desirous of diminishing them. For instance, running down a somewhat steep hill one day, we came to a part of the road where the track was enclosed by high cliffs. In the middle of the road before us stood another car jacked up and under repair. There was, unfortunately, no room to pass it as it stood. So, perforce, we waited as patiently as we could until the repairs to the obstructing car were completed. My driver was particularly contemptuous, indicating with many gestures that the car should have been placed at the side of the road, and that its driver was a man devoid of any public feeling. Twenty-four hours afterwards, in a similar stretch of road, we also sustained a puncture, whereupon my driver himself stopped in the middle of the track, produced his jack, and commenced repairs. It never seemed to occur to him that he was repeating with his own car precisely the fault he had condemned the day before.

It must be said for the Greek chauffeur, however, that in the matter of running repairs he is far more resourceful

than his English opposite number. This is, perhaps, inevitable in a country in which garages are very rarely to be met with.

En route to Epidauros, we struck an extremely large stone, which my driver, for some extraordinary reason, had failed to notice until he was on it. There was a tremendous bang from under the car, and, looking behind, I saw the stone had been split into two pieces, one of which was shot completely off the road. We stopped precipitately, and my driver, piously crossing himself, clambered from the car and, lying full length on the ground, stared upwards with every sign of apprehension. Falling into the spirit of the thing, I also climbed from the car, fell upon the ground at the other end, and stared upwards. Not being a mechanical expert, I failed to see those signs of trouble which the nature of the catastrophe seemed to indicate, but my driver acted in every way as though the machine had been reduced to scrap-iron. None the less, within an hour, with the aid of a shopful of implements produced from every part of the car, he had entirely made good the damage, from which, indeed, we did not appear to suffer any ill effects.

The traveller who elects to travel by train must be prepared to put up with a certain amount of inconvenience. The main line from Athens through Demeli and Salonica northwards, is of regulation gauge, but it is advisable to travel, if possible, by the Simplon Express which runs thrice weekly. The Peloponnesus Railway is narrow gauge, one metre in width, and the trains are both infrequent and slow. None the less, a dining-car is run on certain of the trains between Athens and the chief centres of the Peloponnesus, and the line is picturesque in the extreme. Indeed, I cannot imagine a better way of viewing the mountains of Southern Greece than by taking the train from Corinth to Kalamata. A car is doubtless more convenient, and, with it, one is

more one's own master in the matter of starting and stopping, but from what I saw of it, the Peloponnesus Railway is quite as picturesque as the road, which, indeed, is often within sight of it for miles on end.

I have mentioned elsewhere the difficulty of finding a good inn. At Delphi, Olympia, Nauplia, Salonica and a few other centres, reasonable accommodation can be secured, but, generally speaking, the "inn," as we understand the term in England, does not exist. There are certain places where a bed can be hired, but the traveller making use of them will be expected to secure his own meals elsewhere in the town. For this reason, it is advisable to plan a tour carefully in advance, and to seek the assistance of some well-known tourist agency familiar with the country.

The Greeks are by no means a dangerous people to travel amongst, exception being made, of course, to the brigands who may usually be found in the central northern part of the country. Fortunately, there are no brigands in the Peloponnesus. The ordinary Greek is quite friendly to foreigners, and outside of Athens I do not know that theft is more common in Greece than elsewhere. The Greek, however, is childishly curious, and, of course, utterly unreliable. His curiosity assumes surprising forms. An entire stranger, for instance, will not hesitate to ask you who you are or where you are going, what is your business, whether you are married, and how many children you have. The same feeling will induce the native boy or girl at an inn to open an unlocked bag and examine the contents. They are, in fact, intensely curious to know who you are and what you have.

I have already referred to the Greek brigand. Unlike many so-called brigands in other countries, the Greek variety is a real menace to the safety of the traveller. Most brigands are to be found in Thessaly, where they

levy tribute upon such Greeks as they may capture with a coolness which is really astonishing. Various Greek Governments have come in for a considerable amount of criticism on the score of the brigands, but nobody who knows anything about the matter would be prepared to underrate the immense difficulties which must be overcome before the brigands are exterminated. Operating in a country wild and mountainous to the last degree and peopled very sparsely by villagers more or less openly in sympathy with them, these desperadoes can laugh at any ordinary force of gendarmerie.

Many years ago, when the Turks held the country, the brigand was, in effect, a *franc-tireur*. More often than not, he was actuated by a sincere hatred for the invader, and in the eyes of the peasant he represented the cause of national freedom and of religion ; and something of the halo which surrounded the earlier brigands in the eyes of the peasant still encircles the head of his modern descendant. The peasant, in fact, cannot be brought to regard the brigand as anything but a hero who has cut himself loose from society, and who is persecuted by an unsympathetic Government. Again, the brigand purchases his supplies at one or other of the small villages within his territory, and invariably pays far more than the market price for anything he wants. Thus the peasants have more than a sneaking sympathy for the brigand, and when they hear that he has held up some wealthy man, they are far from sharing the indignation of the wealthy man's friends, who live very probably in Athens or Salonica.

In their endeavours to bring the peasants to a juster view of their responsibilities, successive Greek Governments have already gone to great lengths. Only a short while since, troops seized the inhabitants of three villages accused of harbouring brigands, and transported them all, men, women and children, to some remote island

in the *Ægean*. But the effect of this drastic step upon other villages was practically nil.

A brigand will operate over such a large area that as many as 5,000 soldiers may be required for his capture. Even then, thanks to the intelligence system with which friendly villagers provide him, it is quite on the cards that the wanted man will escape.

As one way of getting over the difficulty, the Government offered a free pardon to any brigand who would shoot any other brigand. But the effect of this proposal was very different from what had been anticipated. Where, previously, two or more brigands had worked in collusion, they were decided, by the edict, to part company, each taking a certain well-defined territory as his own. The consequence was that the actual number of brigands appeared to have increased rather than lessened, since bandits were afterwards to be met with in districts where previously they had not been known.

The effrontery of these men is almost incredible. For the capture of one man the Government offered a reward of some thousands of drachmae, but the brigand, hearing of the offer, or more probably reading it for himself, promptly put out notices offering to carry a similar sum upon his own person in order to double the reward.

Three gentlemen, an ex-minister, a wealthy merchant, and a doctor, were out in the country one day when a brigand made his appearance. All three took to flight. After running a little distance, the wealthy merchant managed to climb up a tree, where he hid among the branches, but the doctor was severely wounded by a shot from the brigand. Seeing his friend in trouble, the ex-minister returned, and the brigand soon found himself with two prisoners. He was extremely annoyed to find that the merchant was not amongst them. However, seeing that the doctor was badly wounded, he despatched the ex-minister to Salonica to secure a

ransom for him, assuring him that, failing the payment of 200,000 drachmae within forty-eight hours, he would cut the doctor's throat. The feelings of the wealthy merchant up the tree at hearing all this, are better imagined than described. If a doctor was valued at 200,000 drachmae, what in the world would be the price for a merchant of great reputed wealth? However, the doctor was ransomed in due course, and in due course also the wealthy man came out of his tree and safely reached home.

Just before I reached Salonica, a brigand who had reason to think that one of the villagers had given the authorities certain information regarding his movements, walked into the village concerned in broad daylight, and, after knocking at the front door of the house in which his enemy resided, he entered and shot him through the head. On his return journey through the village, he met an officer and two troopers. He promptly shot the officer and eluded the troopers. Such exploits give these bandits a certain prestige which the papers imprudently increase by publishing real or fancied accounts of their early life and love affairs. One paper, when I was in Greece, went so far as to arrange a special interview between its own representative and a notorious brigand upon whose head the Government had set a price. Recent Governments have made renewed efforts to deal with this menace to free travel, but I shall not believe that brigandage is a thing of the past in Greece until the Greek villager entirely changes his outlook on life.

But, however that may be, the area in which brigands are to be met with, large as it actually is, forms comparatively but a small part of the interior of Northern Greece, and this the visitor can easily avoid. In the Peloponnesus, where the visitor is much more likely to wish to travel than in the north, brigands are unknown.

CHAPTER XXI

THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

“ Half Smyrna lay in ashes ; all Greece was in confusion. Happily for the honour of the West, the League of Nations was both willing and able to respond to the appeal of the Greek Government for aid.”—“ *THE TIMES.*”

THE Greek Refugee Problem originated in the Treaty of Sèvres, under which Greece received a Mandate to occupy and administer Smyrna and the surrounding territory. Unfortunately for the Greeks, Turkey cared very little for the wishes of the Great Powers concerned, and in 1922 Turkish forces under Mustapha Kemal Pasha utterly defeated the Greek Army and recovered the mandated territory. The Greek military forces made a very poor display upon this occasion.

From the point of view of the Greek population the resulting situation was deplorable in the extreme. It is by no means certain that the Turks would have shown leniency to the Greeks in any circumstances, but as it happened the excesses of the retreating Greek Army had utterly infuriated them. Thus the entire Greek population of Asia Minor took to flight and were brought into Greece in a state of destitution. To these were added the Greeks of Eastern Thrace and smaller numbers returning from the Caucasus, from Bulgaria, and from Constantinople, till ultimately the refugees amounted to some 1,400,000.

It may be doubted whether more than 200,000 of this

number were in a position to establish themselves without help.

Prior to the influx of refugees, the population of Greece did not greatly, if at all, exceed 5,000,000. The country was, at the time, in a very disturbed state, its finances being entirely disorganized as the consequence of many years of almost continuous warfare.

It was in these circumstances that in February 1923 the Greeks appealed to the League of Nations. It is probable that when the epitaph of the League comes to be written, it will be chronicled that it failed utterly in the purpose for which it was created and succeeded beyond all expectations in directions never contemplated when it was founded. At any rate the League is becoming steadily more distrusted as a safeguard against war and more and more relied upon in the discharge of functions which the Powers from mutual jealousy would deny to each other. Thus in spite of the chaotic condition of the Greek finances at that time, the League succeeded in financing the first efforts to establish the immigrants; and later, towards the close of 1924, floated under its own auspices a loan of £10,000,000. The confidence of the investing public in the League was never better displayed than in the astonishing response with which this loan was met. This feature was the more surprising since in the last resort interest upon the loan must depend upon the financial stability of Greece, which, one would suppose, it is not easy for the League to guarantee.

In the administration of the Refugee Loan the League was represented by a Committee of four, consisting of two Greek representatives, one Englishman and one American. Its first chairman was Mr. Henry Morgenthau, formerly American Ambassador at Constantinople: he was succeeded by Mr. P. C. Howland, who has just retired to be replaced by Mr. Eddy. Sir John Campbell, the British representative, has been vice-chairman



THE CHIEF PRIEST AT METEORON MONASTERY

throughout, and has brought to the task the invaluable experience and training of the I.C.S.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the Commission had not a clear field to start with. When it came into being, a great number of projects were in existence, many representing too large an expenditure of money to be of value. I think I am right in saying, however, that the scheme most dear to the Commissioners was the settlement of peasant proprietors in the agricultural territory of Macedonia. To secure this end the Greek Government allocated large tracts of country, and this land the Commission has split up into villages. These villages more often than not bear the same name and, far more marvellous, are occupied by the same persons, as the original villages in Asia Minor. Probably nothing about the refugees is more astonishing than the way in which these generally illiterate and ignorant peasants have managed to keep in touch with each other. Thus there has sprung up in Macedonia a number of villages which, to all intents and purposes, might have been transferred *en bloc* from the distant shores of Anatolia.

Coming as I did from a country in which it is impossible to purchase a habitable bungalow at less than some hundreds of pounds, I was amazed at the low figure at which the Commission executed its work. For instance, a bungalow with two living-rooms, a stable and a store-room costs the Commission in all about £70. A similar house with the luxury of an entrance hall cost about £80. To erect these houses at such a figure in a manufacturing country with every facility of factory and railway would be a sufficiently remarkable feat, but to put them up at this figure in the wilds of Macedonia, when the tiles for the roofs had to be fetched from France or Italy and where a road is more rare than a well-ballasted railway at home, is really astonishing. The houses are constructed chiefly of material obtained

locally, principally of mud or brick or stone. Where water is to be found at too great a depth for the peasant to provide his own supply, the Commission sinks an artesian well. A small amount has been done by way of making rough roads, linking up the villages with the trunk roads.

Not every refugee receives the same amount of land, the governing factor being the produce which the land would yield. For instance, where wheat is grown, the normal allowance is from 40 to 50 strémma¹ per family. Tobacco, however, yields a far higher return than wheat, and tobacco-growing lands are allotted at from 5 to 6 strémma² a family. The intention is so far as possible to equalize the benefits between one class of producer and another.

The peasant who has been settled in Macedonia is the agriculturist from Anatolia who is already well versed in the cultivation of wheat or tobacco. He is provided as far as possible with the kind of land to which he is accustomed. Many difficulties have naturally arisen, one of the most troublesome perhaps being the fact that some of the land allocated to the refugees by the Government was found to have been already taken up and actually under cultivation. To some extent, this difficulty has been got over by curtailing the normal size of the village. On the whole there has been a pleasant absence of friction between the old-established proprietor and his newly-arrived neighbour.

The arrangement between Greece and Turkey was in one respect less one-sided than the nature of the refugee problem suggests. It was arranged that nationals on both sides should be repatriated. This meant, of course, that a certain number of Turkish houses were available for the newly-arrived refugees. The Turkish population in Greece, however, has never approached in

¹ From 9.88 to 12.35 acres.

² Between 1 and 2 acres.

numbers the Greek population in Turkey, so that relief from this source was distinctly limited.

So far the Committee has erected over 20,000 houses in the towns and over 40,000 in the country. One effect of the new Macedonian villages has been to open up the country, and already one narrow-gauge line has been built by private enterprise as a direct result of the influx of population. This line, I believe, is proving remunerative.

It may be asked what guarantee the Commission has that the settled peasant will work his land to the best of his ability. The answer is that he is aware that if he does not do so he will starve. There is fortunately no system of doles in any way corresponding to that of England, although where necessary, the Commission pay a maintenance grant in cash or kind, the amount of the grant being the absolute minimum upon which a human being can live. Again, money expended upon the agricultural peasant is not lost, because the farm is, so to speak, security for the loan, and if in the course of a year or two the peasant should default, it will not be a difficult matter to replace him by a farmer who will take up his payments and carry on his farm.

One of the problems to be faced is that of the Macedonian marsh lands. The task of draining this land, although it should be remunerative in the long run, would necessitate an expenditure for which the Commission has no funds. The Greek Government has similarly no money at its disposal. The matter would seem therefore to be one for private enterprise. It has been suggested that a solution may be found in an arrangement under which private enterprise would bear the entire expenditure upon drainage, and receive in return 50 per cent or so of the reclaimed land for a period of years. Whether anything will come of this suggestion I cannot say, but as the land should be eminently suitable for the cultivation of cotton, the Greek

Government should be able to bring it under cultivation sooner or later.

It is almost impossible, when dealing with a great movement, such as the influx of the Asiatic Greeks into Greece, to forecast any ultimate result, but I am inclined to think that in the long run, Greece will gain considerably from this apparent calamity. Already new industries are springing up as a direct consequence of the presence of the refugees. These Turkish refugees are an extremely self-reliant type, and what is Turkey's loss is a distinct gain for the Greeks. The carpet-makers have established a new and very profitable industry in Greece, while the exports of tobacco and agricultural produce generally have materially increased. Further, it can scarcely be other than advantageous to Greece that she should now have settled upon her Northern frontier far better fighting material than previously existed anywhere in the country. As a soldier, the Anatolian Greek is in every way superior to the native, and he is now to be found in large numbers just where he is likely to be required.

On the question of the capacity for self-help exhibited by these peasants, I can record an example which I should have found incredible if it had been given me by anyone but Sir John Campbell himself. It seems that in many instances the peasants have raised a loan on their potential crops, merely to enable themselves to put the balance of their land under cultivation.

There is, however, another and equally important aspect of the case. It can scarcely be disputed that the peasant proprietor is the greatest safeguard any country can have against the spread of Bolshevism, and the settlement of a great number of peasant proprietors in the northern part of Greece constitutes an effective barrier against those theories which the Russians are seeking to broadcast in the Balkan States.

Putting forward these facts one day to a distinguished foreigner in Athens, I was met with the argument that while these benefits were real enough they were costing the Greek Government a sum of money which the country really could not afford to pay. Upon this point, however, I am frankly a sceptic. It must be remembered that the peasant proprietor is not given his land. It is true that everything is done for him, that the land is allocated, that his farm-house is built, that his stock is provided, that his farm implements are placed ready to his hand, but none of these things are given to him. The Commission is in the first instance purchasing at extraordinarily low rates. This it is enabled to do from the immense amount of material required coupled with the business ability it has at its command: but the sum that the Commission expends in respect of any particular settler is known to the last halfpenny, and the peasant is required to repay this sum gradually over a period of years. The advantage to the settler need not be pointed out. Not only can he start work immediately, but he has constructed his house and purchased his stock at rates which are amazingly low. The advantage to the Government will be apparent when the entire loan has been repaid by the peasant proprietors and when in addition over a million settlers will have been successfully placed upon land hitherto derelict, or nearly so. Generally speaking, the peasant must be allowed two years in which to find his feet: that is to say, the peasant will not be in a position to repay any part of the loan until he has been settled upon his land for at least two years and quite possibly it will take him fifteen years or so to complete the purchase. None the less, if the hopes of the Commission are realized, no part of the £10,000,000 loan will remain a permanent charge upon the Greek finances.

The position, therefore, will ultimately be this, that

a self-supporting population will have been increased by over one million souls, a fact which must be reflected in the revenue derived from taxation, and that new industries will have been started which in their turn will again benefit the national finances. If we take a long view, therefore, it is possible to anticipate very satisfactory results from the present situation.

When we turn from the country to the towns, however, the outlook is less promising. Amongst the refugees entering Greece were great numbers who had formerly resided in urban centres, and these men, of course, could not be placed upon the land. To meet this difficulty a settlement was started in the early days in the suburbs of Athens. There can be no doubt that every town in Greece should have been compelled to absorb its quota of urban refugees. However, this was not done, and the Commission upon taking up its labours had to deal with the situation as it found it. Up to the present moment, the Greek capital has shown a wonderful power of assimilation, and as long as trade continues to be good it is probable that the immense number of immigrants will keep themselves above the starvation line. But if trade should be bad in Greece for a time, it is very difficult to see how these people are to be provided for. The Byron settlement within two miles of the centre of Athens is creditable in every way, but as I have suggested it is still to be shown that the large population housed in it can be economically used.

More often than not, the urban refugee is a casual labourer. When trade is good he manages with difficulty to scrape together sufficient money to pay an instalment upon the purchase price of his house, but when trade is bad and he is out of work, he quickly gets into debt again. Again, his house does not in any sense constitute the same class of security as a farmstead. It cannot be made to produce anything beyond a tenant who is

prepared to pay the rent, and when trade is really bad it is quite likely that such a tenant will not be forthcoming. To what extent, if any, the Commission will lose money over the urban refugees is more than I can say, but I shall be pleasantly surprised if the advances made to him are returned even to the extent of 50 per cent.

However, Sir John Campbell and his colleagues are quite awake to these considerations, and it is probably an indication of their views, that of the £10,000,000 loan, roughly a little over £8,000,000 has been spent upon agricultural communities. These figures are instructive when we remember that only about 60 per cent of the peasant refugees are agricultural labourers.

A possible result of the appearance of the urban refugees in such numbers will be the gradual building up of Greek industry. Greece at present is peculiarly dependent upon outside countries, and there is no doubt that given the initiative and an available supply of labour, she can manufacture for herself with considerable success. One of these conditions is now fulfilled and I shall not be surprised if in the near future we witness the building of a number of factories round about Athens and Piræus, and, as perhaps a necessary corollary, the erection of a high tariff wall against competing imports from other European countries.

These notes would not be complete without some mention of the splendid work that has been done by charitable funds on behalf of the urban refugee. I confess I was prejudiced against the "Save the Children Fund," for no better reason than my inherent dislike for catchy titles. But it is difficult to imagine what would have happened to the refugees in Piræus and Athens, Volo and Larissa and especially about Salonica if this Fund had not been inaugurated. When I was in Athens early in 1925, the "Save the Children Fund"

was daily feeding about 45,000 people of whom about 15,000 were adults.

I had several conversations with Dr. Kennedy, who was in charge of this Fund in Greece. He remarked that in his opinion the refugee had come through his terrible ordeal very well. He lands, Dr. Kennedy remarked, prepared to work out his own salvation if he is given even the elements of a start, and compares most favourably in this respect with the Russian refugee. The Greek from Anatolia in fact has considerable moral backbone. Adversity does not crush his desire to work and to be self-supporting. Almost precisely the same remark, by the way, was made to me by Sir John Campbell, the British representative upon the Refugee Settlement Commission. There are, however, always a certain number of people who are prepared to stir up trouble if they can do so, and the refugee is sometimes assured that the Government owes him what has been done for him, and that it is preposterous that he should be asked to pay for his house, his livestock and so on. However, up to the present moment the refugee has not shown any great disinclination to undertake the repayment of the advances made to him.

One of the most difficult problems arising from the refugee question, is that of the widowed mother with children. Including the children, it is estimated that there are still between 200,000 and 300,000 of these cases. One remembers with satisfaction that the children will grow up, but in the meantime, it must be a mystery to many others besides myself how these unfortunate people manage to keep body and soul together.

Naturally the influx of 1,400,000 refugees constitutes a question of considerable political interest. Prior to the influx of the refugees, the Royalists and Venizelists were fairly evenly matched. Nobody, I believe, could say precisely which party held the superiority in point

of numbers, as it was certain that at many recent elections a large section of the population had not troubled to vote. If we take the potential voting power of the country prior to the influx, at 5 millions, fairly equally divided between the two parties, it will be seen that the 1,400,000 votes of the Greeks from Asia Minor control the position. It is, however, improbable that there will ever be an "Asia Minor" party. A much more likely development is a gradual splitting of the new votes between the old-established parties. There appears to be no ground for the fear entertained at one time that a heavy Communist vote will result. I should perhaps add that the refugee is entitled to vote, and to all the privileges of citizenship, the moment he lands in Greece.

No Englishman can view without satisfaction the splendid work which the League has performed in Greece, work in which it can be said without offence, England and America, through their representatives, have played by far the largest part. It is to be hoped, however, that before the League raises another loan for refugee settlement purposes, it will endeavour to secure some really satisfactory guarantees on the subject of Greek finances. The confidence of the investor in the League of Nations is undoubtedly well-founded and for this reason alone, the League should impose the most rigid conditions upon any country it proposes to assist.

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